

ZILLAH;
A TALE OF
THE HOLY CITY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF
"BRAMBLETYE HOUSE," "THE-TOR HILL,"
"REUBEN APSLEY," &c.

**"From thee and thy innocent beauty first came
The revealings that taught him true love to adore,
To feel the bright presence, and turn him with shame
From the idols he darkly had knelt to before,"**

T. MOORE.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. I

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following work was placed in the Publisher's hands early in March last, with a view to its immediate publication,—an intention which, after the appearance of “Salathiel,” it was deemed advisable to defer till the present season. Considering that the scene is often identical, and the æra nearly so, there are perhaps not so many coincidences between the two novels as might have been expected ; and though the author of the present work, willing to avoid any immediate comparison, still less any appearance of competition with the powerful writer of *Salathiel*, postponed its publication, he has not thought it necessary to make any alteration in its pages, beyond a few trifling omissions.

PREFACE.

IN the civil wars and general confusion that ensued upon the death of Julius Cæsar, the Parthians, having made themselves masters of all Lesser Asia and Syria, took Jerusalem, carried off Hyrcanus, the King and High Priest of the Jews, into captivity, and settled Antigonus—who had engaged them in that enterprise by a promised reward of a thousand talents and five hundred Jewish women—upon the throne of Judæa. Herod, afterwards surnamed the Great, who was at that time Governor of the

Palace for Hyrcanus, ~~departed~~ from Jerusalem, with his family and effects, and betaking himself to Rome, laid open his affairs to Mark Antony, promising him a large sum of money, if he would procure him to be made King. Antony was favourable to his suit;—Octavius Cæsar, exasperated against Antigonus, whom he considered as a turbulent man and hostile to the Roman people, was equally desirous of obliging Herod:—by their joint influence, the Senate, then at war with the Parthians, declared Antigonus an enemy to the Commonwealth, and in a formal vote pronounced Herod to be King of Judæa. Upon the breaking up of the Senate, Antony and Octavius Cæsar, accompanied by the Consuls and Senators, conducted the newly elected King to the Capitol, where, having performed sacrifice, and deposited the decree, they saluted him upon his accession, and honoured

him with a magnificent banquet. This happened about forty years before Christ; and the incidents recorded in the following volumes are supposed to occur between this period, and the capture of the Holy City, about three years afterwards, by Herod, assisted by the Roman general Sosius. The final destruction of Jerusalem took place about a hundred years later.

By the selection of a period thus intervening between the termination of the Old Testament and the commencement of the New, the writer has not only the advantage of an æra with which the general reader is comparatively little conversant, so far, at least, as the Jewish history is concerned; but he is enabled to avoid all immediate contact with those personages and events which, having been made the subject of Holy Writ, could not, perhaps, be introduced, without some violation of propriety, into a work

of this nature. Most of the incidents and descriptions, however, with several of the characters, will be found to associate themselves, either retrospectively or prospectively, with the Hebrew sacred history, which the author has humbly, and he hopes not profanely, endeavoured to recall and illustrate, whenever an opportunity presented itself; while by occasionally transferring the scene to Rome and other places, he has been enabled to attempt a sketch of some of the principal events which were then being transacted upon the great theatre of the world, —events not less important from their influence upon the fate of nations, than interesting from the illustrious character of the actors concerned in producing them.

As the author's subject is not exclusively a Scriptural one, he has purposely avoided that peculiar phraseology, which, however, it may be

associated in our minds with every record of ancient Jerusalem, might be held unseemly in a work of fiction; while it would inevitably impart an air of stiffness to the trivial details of domestic life. At the time of our tale, the English language itself was not in existence: any antique diction that we might have assumed, would only have removed the phraseology out of the present æra, without transplanting it into a more appropriate one; and we have, therefore, left the interlocutors to express themselves as their several natures might seem to prompt, not shunning familiar colloquialisms when the station or character of the speaker might warrant them; and employing the loftier language of Scripture upon those occasions only when its use appeared both appropriate and decorous.

In explanation of the proud, not to say arro-

gant nationality, which might otherwise appear overstrained in some of the Jewish characters introduced in the following pages, the reader is requested to bear in mind, that their religion rendered it difficult to avoid a certain degree of intolerance. Holding that themselves alone had received a revelation from Heaven; that they alone were the depositaries of the favour and will of the Deity; that they alone had been taught by inspired prophets, confirmed by signs, portents, and prodigies, wherein the heavens themselves had become miraculous accessories to the Divine mandates, they naturally considered themselves the first people of the earth, and looked down with hatred and disdain upon all the rest of the world as heathens and barbarians.

That the reader may be somewhat more conversant with the features of the celebrated City, which constitutes the principal scene of

our novel, it is hoped he will excuse a few preliminary remarks upon its probable appearance at the æra we have mentioned. While the theocratical form of the Jewish Government had always rendered their Temple one of the grandest and richest in the world, and, of course, the most conspicuous ornament of their capital, their religious ordinances had imparted a not less marked and peculiar character to the other buildings of the city. Here was to be seen, at the time of our history, neither circus, theatre, nor hippodrome ; neither triumphal arches, nor luxurious baths and gardens for general resort ; no sculptured columns, or obelisks, not even a single public statue or painting. In every respect the reverse of that Roman commonalty who lived contented so long as they could enjoy bread and the shows of the circus, the Jews required no other recreation than

the feasts and festivals of their religion ; of that religion which, while it pervaded all their public acts and institutions, had even affected the form of their private dwellings. Having become the residence of the symbols of the Divine presence, which, in the form of a cloud, rested over the mercy-seat of the Sanctuary in the Temple, whence God gave forth His oracles from time to time in an articulate and audible voice, Jerusalem assumed the name of the Holy City, in which quality it was common to all the tribes of Israel. Though there were dispersed synagogues wherever there was a sufficient population to require them, there was but one Temple for the whole nation ; and at this universal altar was every male Hebrew bound to present himself, with offerings to his God, at the three great annual festivals, of the Passover, the Pentecost, and the Feast of Tabernacles,—to which some others

were added, at a later period of their history. Of the prodigious influx into the city upon these occasions, an estimate may be formed from the statement of Josephus, that, during the final siege by Titus, which commenced while there was a general assemblage for the celebration of the Passover, not less than eleven hundred thousand of the Jews perished, while ninety-seven thousand were made prisoners of war.

From the natural peculiarities of its site, which scarcely admit of change or error, it is conjectured, that the ancient city could hardly have exceeded four miles in circumference, while some assign to it a still narrower measurement; so that, to accommodate such a multitude of occasional visitants, even in the rudest manner, it was indispensable that the whole area should be thickly covered with close streets and lofty houses, containing numerous small

chambers. Within the walls, as has been already observed, there were no public gardens, and with the exception of the space occupied by the Temple, (which also had its inhabitants,) and the four principal markets, which formed so many open areas, we may presume that the enclosed ground constituted a vast mass of houses, intersected by narrow lanes, rising and falling with the inequalities of the surface. The entire city, built upon abrupt hills, rising amphitheatrically from east to west, was surrounded on three sides by steep precipices surmounted by walls; while the fourth, which was to the north, and extended along a plain, was defended by a triple line of bulwarks, so that the whole wore the air of an inexpugnable fortress, of which the castle of David, upon the hill of Zion, might be said to resemble the keep. The strongly fortified Temple, from the loftiness of its dimen-

sions, as well as from the commanding elevation upon which it was placed, would, of course, form the pre-eminent object ; the numerous towers and battlements of the city walls, were the next most conspicuous buildings. The palaces, at the period of our history, were rather remarkable for their strength than their magnificence ; the Jews had no nobility who could emulate kings and pontiffs in their sumptuous mansions ; and thus the remainder of Jerusalem would present little to the eyes of the spectator but an undistinguishable aggregate of private dwellings. These, for the reason we have mentioned, being generally lofty, the builders were compelled, by the law, to put a battlement or balustrade at the top, to prevent accidents. On the roofs, which were flat, and occasionally provided with cisterns to collect the rain water, the inhabitants would sometimes be seen drying flax, perform-

ing their devotions in little closets, or oratories, set up for that purpose, or conversing with their neighbours, while they enjoyed the cool of the evening. And here, too, since their mode of construction, especially in the higher part of the city, rendered them private places, we are told by Jeremiah, that his contemporaries would sometimes burn incense, and pour out drink-offerings to false gods. They formerly would not allow the beams of a floor to jut out into the street, lest, if there should be any person dead upon that floor, they who walked beneath the beams should be polluted without knowing it.

“ But although the size of Jerusalem was not extensive,” says a recent traveller,* “ its very situation, on the brink of rugged hills, encircled by deep and wild valleys, bounded by eminences

* Carne's Letters from the East, vol. i. p. 332.

whose sides were covered with groves and gardens, added to its numerous towers and its Temple, must have given it a singular and gloomy magnificence, scarcely possessed by any other city in the world."

In the earlier ages, the pious inhabitants, viewing their countrymen, who came up to celebrate the three great yearly festivals, as brethren acting in obedience to the law, engaged in the same religious duties, and making offerings to the same God of Unity as themselves, made it a point of conscience, not only to provide accommodations for as many as they could, but to refuse all remuneration for the lodgings thus afforded. The style of the more ancient domestic architecture attested the prevalence of this custom; for the citizens, wishing to be as little incommoded as possible by the irruption of strangers, for whom they held themselves thus bound to

provide a gratuitous habitation, continued to occupy the lower apartments, which had no internal communication with the upper rooms. The latter were left open to the visitants, who chose for themselves, according to their liking, or as they found them empty; and the inhabitants took care to provide them with beds. These apartments could only be reached by means of a ladder, with or without a handrail, which being placed diagonally against the outside of the building, and communicating with a projecting landing-place at each story, was sometimes a fixture, and sometimes removable at pleasure. The law was severe against broken ladders, but this rude mode of climbing to the upper rooms was in time succeeded by an external staircase of wood or brick, such as we occasionally see in some of our own rural buildings, and of which specimens were doubtless

still remaining in the more ancient parts of Jerusalem at the time chosen for our narrative though the pious custom in which they originated had long since fallen into desuetude. With the enlargement of the nation, the increase of luxury and refinement, and the diminution of the primitive hospitality,—inns and caravanseras had sprung up, where the common class of votaries were doubtless obliged to leave their offerings, before they could make their oblations at the Temple; while, for the accommodation of the richer visitants, lodging-houses were provided, whose owners, especially if they resided in the vicinity of the sacred building, we may presume to have been as well skilled in asking high prices, at the period of the annual festivals, as are any of their modern English brethren of the same trade, during the height of the fashionable season at Brighton, Bath, or Cheltenham.



Z I L L A H.

CHAPTER I.

It was about the beginning of the month Sivan, answering to part of our May and June, on the sixth day of which the Feast of the Pentecost was to be celebrated, that the widow Dinah quitted her house in the street known by the name of "The Cheesemongers" at Jerusalem, and bent her way on the shady side of the ravine which, parting Mount Sion from the Hill of Moriah, leads down to the Pool of Siloam. Being of a thrifty and provident turn, she took

especial care, before she departed, to affix a mark to her door, signifying that lodgings were to be let ; ordering her only maid servant, at the same time, not to quit the premises even for a moment ; and strictly charging her to urge the great conveniency of the situation, on account of its easy distance from the Temple, should any strangers present themselves in search of apartments. This was indeed the sole recommendation of her house ; for it was a poor tenement, and of difficult access on account of the steepness of the acclivity upon which it stood. It was her purpose to call on her friend Martha, who resided near the Wood-market, in the northern quarter of the city ; but as the widow piqued herself upon her forethought, and never performed the most insignificant action without calculation, she considered that, as it was now evening, and the sun was to the westward, it would be cooler and pleasanter to go outside the city walls, under the shade of the height upon which the Temple was

placed, than to toll through the hot and crowded streets of the town. She accordingly pursued her way in this direction, and was not disappointed of the shade she had anticipated, especially when she skirted the base of Mount Moriah and the sacred edifice, whose spacious and lofty mass, intercepting the rays of the declining sun, threw a broad outline of shadow even across the brook Cedron, and into the Valley of Jehoshaphat. But, in other respects, the wary widow, as was indeed not unfrequently the case, had been deceived by her own calculations, and betrayed into annoyance from her over anxiety to avoid it; for the road that ran along the banks of the Cedron, and all those leading down into the Valley from the opposite Mount of Olives, were crowded with wayfarers, some mounted on mules or asses, some in carts and low open carriages, some on foot, and all making their way towards the city, to be ready for the celebration of the approaching Pentecost.

Market-people of every description, and flocks of sheep and kids for the supply of the expected multitude, were crowding in the same direction ; while an east wind blew such a cloud of dust from the mingled assemblage towards the rocky sides of the Temple Mount, that Dinah, half-blinded by the minute sand, stumbled over a root and fell. Though she sustained no injury, she considered the occurrence as of evil omen, and began to entertain sad misgivings as to the chance of her procuring lodgers at the festival. These presentiments were confirmed, when a small stone, detached by some workmen who were employed in repairing the city walls, bounded down the steep sides of the Mount, and, striking her upon the arm, inflicted a slight bruise. All her hopes now vanished away, dispersing with them her confident anticipations that, by the produce of her apartments, added to the pot of silver shekels, and the seven double Maccabees which she had

buried under her kitchen-floor, she should be enabled to purchase the tenement in which she resided, and have the satisfaction of calling her house her own. Accelerating her pace in no very gracious mood, and jostling aside the other passengers without much courtesy, she hurried into the city by the Sheep-gate, and, making her way to the Wood-market, presently reached the abode of her friend.

The Hebrews were commanded by Moses to write the Law upon the posts of their houses, and upon their gates. The inscription, called Mesusah, was generally fixed upon the right side of their gates, sometimes written upon little rolls, and hung up, or put into a hole in the wall, and occasionally written upon the door-post itself; but all who pretended to religion, upon entering or quitting the house, laid their hands upon the place, and said, "The Lord preserve my going out and my coming in." Though there were nothing but a few illegible remains of letters left

upon her friend's door, the widow touched them, uttered the prescribed ejaculation, and, entering the apartment, found the industrious Martha busily employed in grinding corn with a hand-mill.

“ You come in the nick of time,” said Martha, wiping the perspiration from her brow with the hem of her garment, and pointing to the other handle of the mill, which was calculated for two persons,—“ there is but little more to grind ; with your assistance it will quickly be despatched, and you shall then help me to finish a dish of lentiles and onions which are now boiling on the fire.”

“ Climoh he ! Shame upon you, dame !” replied Dinah, seating herself ; “ I came not so far, I promise you, to do Samson's work. We poor women might as well be still at Babylon, if this is to be our task ; and if I had a husband, as you have, who was a Levite and one of the porters of the Temple, he should buy me an ass to grind the corn, ay, and to take me to market,

and the gardens in the Valley too, or I would know the reason why. What ! are the weakest always to be the heaviest laden ? Are we women to inherit for ever the curse of Eve—to bring forth in pain, and to live in slavery and sorrow ? We are to be burthened with trials and penalties, payments and purifications of all sorts, and yet, forsooth, we are not to attend the three great festivals ; we are at times forbidden even to enter the Temple ; those who are married are to wear a veil, in token of subjection to their husbands ; and our testimony is not to be received in a court of law.”

“ Who can say that it is because we are now prone to levity, and apt to talk at random, whatever we might have been in the days of Moses ?” asked Martha, looking archly at her companion.

“ If we are not called to the festivals ourselves,” resumed Dinah, without noticing her friend’s inquiry, “ we are not yet, thank

Heaven ! prevented from making money by those that do attend them ; though we shall have a thin Pentecost, I reckon, and but slender chance of letting our lodgings, while the Holy City is thus to be constantly belcaguered and bedeviled. Eli ! what sieges, and ravages, and robberies have we witnessed in the last few months ! What with Parthians, and Herodians, and Antigonians, pillaging us by turns, we might as well—but, hist !—there are so many spies and eavesdroppers abroad, that a poor woman can scarcely wag her tongue now-a-days, which is the greatest hardship of all.”

“ Remember, good Dinah, that the city is at present open and the ways safe : and as so few were able to come up to the Passover, on account of the troubles, we may expect the fuller Pentecost.”

“ If I were sure of this, I would ask a bekah more for the daily rent of my lodgings : and that reminds me of the purport of my visit.

You know, my old and approved friend, that at this season there is apt to issue an unsavoury odour from the cheesemongers' shops in our street, which might prevent the letting of my apartments. Now, if you would spare me, good Martha, some of that little pot of Arabian frankincense which was given to you by Lebid Ben Rabiath, the merchant, I would burn a morsel of it in my window, and thus——”

“ Alas ! Dinah, why did you not sooner speak to me ? I have now made a Corban of it, and vowed it to the use of the Temple ; for what should poor folks, like us, do with real Arabian frankincense ? ”

“ But the vows of a married woman are not binding, unless when confirmed by the husband.”

“ True, Dinah ; and mine has been ratified by my good man Simon.”

“ At all events, you have not sent it away, for I can still smell it in the cupboard.”

“ But I have sworn by Issar ; and surely you would not have the wife of one of the Temple porters, and a Levitess——”

“ Well, well, Martha, I wanted the perfume, not a sermon. Methinks every thing is *Corban* that I ever ask you for ; and, for fear the lentiles and onions should share the same fate, we may as well pounce upon them at once, for they must needs be boiled by this time.”

“ You shall share them with me, and welcome,” said Martha, who had not any wish to save her pottage ; though it is by no means impossible that she had had recourse to a practice which was then common, and had urged the pretext of her frankincense being *Corban*, for the mere purpose of protecting so valuable an ointment from the solicitation of importunate friends. She accordingly drew out the table from the wall, washed it, and proceeded to a little closet which contained her crockery and platters ; when she started back with a shudder of mingled

aversion and anger, exclaiming—"El emanu ! was there ever any thing so provoking ? it is but an hour since I washed and wiped every dish, and lo ! there is a dead mouse lying on the topmost pan."

"Tush ! dame, what signifies ? Throw it out of window, and take another plate."

"Impossible ! it is a dead animal, and one moreover, that is declared to be unclean. The pan must be broken in pieces, and every article beneath it must be washed afresh."

"You will not surely be so squeamish : the lentiles will be boiled to a pulp."

"How ! would you have the wife of a Levite and one of the porters of the Temple disobey the Law ? Suppose our betters were to do the same, what might become of the tithes, fruits, and offerings, and to whom should my husband look for his pay and perquisites ?"

"Psha ! the priests will always take good care to have their own, especially when their

spies and proctors go about with a guard of soldiers, as I have seen them within these three days, and carry off the tithes from the barns and granaries by main force. But come, if you must needs be so squeamish, the quicker we wash the platters, the sooner shall we have our supper."

"A plague upon the tiresome animal!" exclaimed Martha: "this is the third pan I have been obliged to break since the Passover—it were cheaper to buy brass at once, for it is better to wash than to destroy:"—and so saying, she smashed the defiled utensil, and threw the pieces out of the window.

In the hall, or entrance chamber, of every Jewish house, there were generally placed pitchers of water, that the inhabitants might comply with the numerous ablutions and purifications enjoined in the Pentateuch, and which had been so absurdly multiplied by the traditionary and ceremonial law, as to be absolutely burthensome

and vexatious. A vessel for this purpose stood in the corner of Martha's apartment; and as Dinah, though she had declined turning the mill, by which she was to gain nothing, had no objection to assist in that process upon which her supper was made dependent, she dipped, and rinsed, and wiped with great alacrity. So liberal, indeed, was she in dispersing the contents of the pitcher, that her hostess was obliged to remind her of the distance from which she was obliged to toil with a heavy bucket on her head whenever they wanted water; adding, moreover, that they might be again obliged to pay for it at the well, as they had done during the last siege. Every thing being at length satisfactorily arranged, they sate down to their pottage, to the perfection of which Dinah declared that nothing was requisite but the addition of a little salt and oil.—“Alas!” exclaimed Martha, as she produced a small remnant of the latter in a leathern bottle, “was ever such an unlucky

child as ours ! Well might we call him Jabez, for he has truly been grief and sadness to his parents ; and though he is no bigger than the letter Jod, he is as mischievous as the wild Ishmaelite. He hung up the bottle yesterday so close to the fire, that the leather shrank, and the oil, as you see, has nearly all leaked out. Nor was that the worst, for it fell upon his Sabbath garment, which he had thrown upon the floor beneath ; so that all the nitre and vinegar in the world will never get out the stains."

"Boys, Martha, will be boys. Ishmael himself, wild as he was in his youth, became a great man in his old age ; and who knows but that Jabez, though he carries stained clothes now, may come to wear purple and fine linen one of these days ?"

"Alas ! 'there is no fruit in autumn when there is no budding in the spring,' says the proverb. The young scapegrace will never be

worth his ransom-money, nor even the oil that he has thus wasted."

"But you have plenty more in the house," said Dinah, who seemed to entertain a shrewd suspicion that this story was akin to that of the Corban, and had been trumped up extempore for the purpose of saving the oil. In this respect, however, she did injustice to her friend, who retorted in a somewhat indignant tone—"What! do you think that, like the tribe of Asher, we can suck oil out of the flinty rock? Plenty in the house, indeed! what sort of plenty is one of the poor porters of the Temple likely to possess?"

"Well, good Martha, well," resumed the guest, emptying upon her own platter all that remained in the bottle—"there is enough, you see, and enough is a feast;—but this barley-bread is burnt, and it has fitches in it, which I never could abide. You were wont to have some cracknels in the upper cupboard." These were produced; and, a small flagon of cheap

Ephraim wine, with two horn cups, being placed upon the board at the same time, the friends finished their meal with much more cordiality than it had been commenced. Humble as was the beverage, it produced its usual effect in opening the heart and promoting communicativeness ; so that, by the time the flagon was emptied, Martha informed her friend, as a profound secret, that she herself was likely to be a widow for some months to come ; since Simon her husband was about to make a long journey, and betake himself to no less distant and celebrated a place than Rome.

“ To Rome ! ” ejaculated Dinah, with a look of unfeigned astonishment ; “ upon what errand, and in whose company can he be going ? ” Here Martha whispered a few words in her companion’s ear ; but as the amazement of the latter was too great to be kept within the same prudent bounds, she exclaimed aloud, “ How ! Rab Malachi, the Sagan—the second High

Priest! is *he* going among the idolaters and the worshippers of Baal?"

"Hush, Dinah, hush! did I not tell you it was a secret? If Jabez were to return and overhear you, the little urchin would spread it all over the town, from the Fish-gate to the King's Aqueduct. But I have still stranger news to tell you;"—and she again put her mouth to her visitant's ear. "Climoh he! Shame, shame!" exclaimed Dinah, as soon as she had heard her; "I will never believe it. Tush! dame: would you persuade me that the pious Sagan would take his beautiful daughter Zillah — *my* Zillah — her whom I nursed from the time she was three years old—that he would take her, good and lovely as she is, among the children of Belial, to a city of reprobation, a den of savages, an Ashdod, a Hebron, a capital of Philistines and Edomites?"

"Nevertheless, it is true, Dinah,—true as the Pentateuch. Why he takes her with him, I

cannot tell ; but the Sagan goes upon some public business of importance, by command of King Antigonus ; and my good man Simon, who is to have double wages while he is absent, and a handsome gratuity at his return, accompanies them as their servant.”

“ And who is to pay me my pension, I wonder ?” asked Dinah, with an alarmed look ; “ the pittance that has been allowed me ever since I left the family. Miserable as it is, I cannot afford to lose it.”

“ I should call it a comfortable stipend, Dinah, were I in the receipt of it ; and there is little doubt that the good Rab Malachi will leave orders with his wife for continuing the payment.”

“ He is more accustomed to take orders from his wife than to give them ; and if I am to depend upon his proud dame for my supply, who is as stiff-necked as one of the kine of Bashan, I may chance to eat the wind and drink the vapour. To Rome ! And how long must God’s people con-

tinue to bow the knee to such idolaters? Is it not enough that we pay tribute-money to these northern savages? must we send our High Priests and our noblest daughters to sue for favour at their hands; for such, I suppose, is the object of this embassy? A curse upon them all!”

“Beware, Dinah—curse not the King, no, not in thy conscience; and curse not the rich, no, not in thy bedchamber; for a bird of the air shall carry the voice, and that which hath wings shall——”

“Nay, Martha, nay,” interposed the widow, somewhat startled at this quotation; “Heaven forbid that I should speak ill either of kings or rich men; but as to the enemies of our country, and the oppressors of Israel, who would lay us under tribute, I say again, that I would not give them a single brass gerah. The Jews acknowledge no king but God; to him they pay tribute in tithes, offerings, and soul-money; and King

Antigonus is his vicegerent. As for these wolf-suckled Romans, I never see their coinage but I spit upon it; and I marvel how any of the children of Abraham can put such an abomination into their girdles, unless, indeed, it comes in the payment of lodgings; and then I would hurry with it to the money-changer's, lest the hand that held it should be suddenly withered like that of Jeroboam. However," she continued, looking cautiously around, "I am sorry I spoke so loud, and I hope no one could overhear me; for, though there be few Romans in the Holy City at present, there is no knowing what may happen hereafter; and, if they are to become our governors, it may be as well to be upon civil terms with them."

"God forbid, Dinah, that their eagle should ever spread its wings over the Temple of Jehovah!"

"Amen! amen! Selah!—Oh, Martha, how deliciously that frankincense smells when one

gets nearer to the cupboard ! Ah ! there is nothing like the real Arabian, after all."

Having snuffed up the odour two or three times with great complacency, she continued—
"Are you quite sure that you did not put aside a small portion, a little fragment, before you made your vow—just a tiny thimbleful that I could pop under the lattice, and so let the wind disperse the perfume through my apartments?"
Martha declared that she had not even unpacked it. "And yet it smells for all the world as if the cover were off," resumed her visitant; "but you can, at all events, spare me a drop of the healing balsam of which the mischievous Jabez has such frequent need, for my arm smarts sorely from the blow of the unlucky stone that fell upon it, and I have perhaps used it too freely in washing your crockery and platters."

As there was no resisting this insinuation, the balsam was quickly produced, and applied to the bruised arm ; when the calculating Dinah,

finding that nothing more was to be gotten, soon after took her departure, muttering to herself as she crossed the Wood-market—"I don't believe a word about the Corban; for nobody would be such a fool as to vow away a pot of real Arabian frankincense.—I wonder whether any one has been to look at my lodgings!—a thin Pentecost! a thin Pentecost!—And my pension from Rab Malachi—I must see about it immediately:—he shall not stir from Jerusalem till I know who is to pay it in his absence."

CHAPTER II.

MALACHI BEN LACHISH, the Sagan, or second High Priest of the Jews, whose mission to Rome had excited so much surprise and indignation in the widow Dinah, although of the ancient Aaronitish line, was the son of a poor man, and in all probability would never have attained his elevated situation, but from his knowledge of the Latin tongue. So great was the contempt of the Hebrews for all other nations, whom they indiscriminately considered as infidels and barbarians, that most of them disdained to acquire their languages; while there were some who even held it an abomina-

tion to speak any other tongue than that which had been consecrated by God himself, both in his revelation of the Law to Moses, and in the subsequent oracles that he had given forth from the cloud that hovered between the Cherubim of the Sanctuary. Theirs was the only language that had been uttered by angels and spirits in their communications with the chosen people;—it was that in which the only Heaven-inspired prophets had ever spoken;—it was that in which the Divine will was recorded and embalmed: and being thus hallowed to their recollections, it is little wonderful that they should deem it a degradation to use the strange speech of the idolatrous Gentiles. Some of the upper classes, however, had been induced to acquire the Greek and Latin languages from a love of the literary treasures which they contained; others, from the necessity occasioned by political relationship, for the Jews had long since formed treaties with both those nations; but their number was still

so small, when Jerusalem was taken by Pompey, that it was not easy to find a person competent to maintain that regular correspondence with the Roman government, which was rendered necessary by the new situation of the kingdom. Malachi Ben Lachish was upon this occasion, and solely from his superior familiarity with the Latin tongue, promoted to an office corresponding in some degree with that of the modern Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. Of this he had continued to discharge the functions for a series of years, and in times of great trouble and difficulty, with not less credit to himself than benefit to his country; when in an evil hour, and after he had passed the meridian of life, he was led to form a second marriage.

Injudicious as was the step, or at least the choice he made, his motive was most amiable, and did honour to his heart, however it might derogate from his judgment. Zillah, the only

child bequeathed to him by his first wife, was now in her sixteenth year; and being the sole claimant of his love, he bestowed it upon her with all the intensity of an ardent and affectionate temperament. Educating her himself, he had not only instructed her in Greek, but had rendered her a perfect mistress of the Latin tongue. Selections from the best writers in both languages had been placed at her disposal; so that at this early age she was a scholar, such as it would not have been very easy to parallel among her male contemporaries, and perhaps impossible in her own sex. The occasional falsehood and folly of this Pagan lore in a religious and moral point of view, the cautious father had not failed to point out and to stigmatise; but it was unnecessary: a much less penetrative and acute faculty than Zillah's could discover the thorns that were too palpable to be hidden by the most lavish profusion of roses, and she was content to imitate the bee by extracting

harmless honey from bitter and even poisonous flowers. Never, indeed, was there a being less liable to contagion of this or of any sort. To one of so pure and sensitive a mind, thus cloistered, as it were, in a holy sanctuary, religion became a vital and ineradicable portion of her being. It might be said, indeed, to grow spontaneously in the moral soil of Jerusalem, to form the very atmosphere of the Holy City, in which the souls of its inhabitants must be necessarily steeped and saturated; for, who among the young and ardent Israelites could grow up in the daily sound of the sacred trumpets calling the chosen people to the worship of its God; who could witness the solemn processions of the priests, and the devotions of the assembled nation; who could contemplate the grandeur of the Temple, with all its awful reminiscences; who could walk along the streets, where almost every house was lifted out of its materiality by some divine association, where “the stone cried

out of the wall, and the beam answered it ;” who could wander around the town, where the sound of every footfall called up some august or miraculous event, and the very dust had been hallowed by the tread of angels and of prophets ;—who could stray among the surrounding deserts and fruitful valleys, the rocks and precipices, the caverns, sepulchres, and monuments, each ennobled by its own particular record, and all conjuring up the most remote ages from the dark abysses of time, while they united earth to Heaven by a continued succession of revelations, prodigies, and prophecies ;—who could be encompassed by such visions of supernatural glory, and not feel himself ready to spring out of his humanity, and become sublimised, as it were, in the fervour of religious enthusiasm ?

Such were the scenes, and such the solemn meditations, to which Zillah had, from her childhood, been accustomed ; and as the came-

leon assumes the hue of the objects by which it is surrounded, so had her character assimilated itself to the locality in which she moved. No other soil could have produced her; she might emphatically be termed a Daughter of Jerusalem,—of that holy city whose children might justly consider piety and patriotism as almost synonymous and interchangeable terms. A mind thus formed would be naturally sedate and meditative; but there was a graciousness, a suavity in her temperament, which redeemed her at once from the feeling and the appearance of any severity that might be incompatible with her youth and innocence. If she was deeply, she was yet calmly religious; for hers was not the enthusiasm which, being suddenly enkindled, may as rapidly evaporate. It had “grown with her growth, and strengthened with her strength;” it was an impulse and a pervading feeling long before her developed reason had given it the sanction of a principle; and she

dreamed not of assuming merit for that which she believed to be a common and inherent tendency of our nature. How the chosen people of the olden times, with so many solemn and trumpet-tongued monitors to corroborate them in the true faith, should have so repeatedly lapsed into idolatry, it was beyond her power to apprehend; but she trusted that they had atoned for these errors by their steadfastness since the Captivity; and her limited intercourse with her countrymen had not yet afforded her any opportunities for discovering that there were hypocrites and pretenders within the purlieus of the Holy City, if not in the very bosom of the Temple itself.

Educated in the strictness of that seclusion which was then common to all the young unmarried females of the Hebrews, and which was rendered still more solitary by the early loss of her mother, she had few companions, and not many recreations to vary the monotony of her

life. Among the latter, that to which she was most passionately addicted was music ; which, while it formed the distinguishing feature of their religion, might be termed the favourite enjoyment of the whole Jewish nation,—one to which they had been devoted since the time of Moses and David, as it is one to which their modern descendants continue their marked attachment. Zillah was a proficient on the psaltery, the national instrument, of which the grave and solemn tones produced by the peculiar form in which it was then fashioned, admirably adapted it for sacred music. The harp, or lyre, of more simple construction, as represented on the medals of Simon Maccabeus, was, of course, familiar to her, as well as the cytharn and the sackbut, for these were all stringed instruments, which, though they might vary in their tone and compass, differed little in the mode of playing them. To these she often sang, her sweet and mellow, though somewhat

plaintive notes, giving an appropriate expression to the psalms or sacred songs which had been composed for the use of the Temple, and set to music, some by King David himself, by the chief musicians Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun, or by more recent masters. Her father generally accompanied her ; for he possessed a fine voice, and was scarcely less fond of the recreation than herself. At other times her needle furnished her employment ; and such was her skill, that she had not only embroidered the robes and girdle which her father wore upon festivals, but had obtained the high and envied honour of decorating, with work of colours and gold thread, one of the hangings of the Sanctuary in the Temple.

In these occupations, varied now and then by the religious festivals, by excursions to the baths, or to the gardens without the walls, whither she was always attended by two of her maids, Zillah was content to pass her time, without

feeling in the smallest degree oppressed by the monotony and seclusion of her life. But when she was entering upon her sixteenth year,—a period of more advanced maturity in the East than it would be reckoned in our colder clime,—her father thought it necessary that she should move in a more extended sphere. Her constitutional sedateness he could not help attributing in some degree to melancholy, arising from the peculiar gloominess of the house in which she resided, and the sequestered nature of her existence; and as his own studious and recluse habits, combined with his official duties, unfitted him for the task of introducing her into the world, and more particularly into female society, he considered that he could not do better than provide her with a stepmother, whose birth and connexions might qualify her for that office. Salome, the widow lady whom he married with this view, was well adapted for his wishes in point of rank and family; for she

was related to the Asmonæan race, and connected by blood with Antigonus, the present King. Nor was there any disproportion in age ; but, in almost every other respect, she proved an incongruous partner, and an unhappy choice. Beneath a smooth and courteous demeanour she concealed great pride of her high descent, much arrogance of temper, and an almost boundless ambition, which led her to meddle in all the political factions and intrigues of which Jerusalem was too apt to be the scene, and of which, at that particular juncture, it constituted a turbulent focus. Restless and aspiring, it appeared to her that to be stationary was to retrograde in rank and consequence :—she had married in the hope of acquiring importance ; and it was therefore her first anxiety to secure her husband's promotion.

To Malachi himself nothing could be less desirable, or indeed more repugnant, than any proceedings of this sort. Though he was im-

petuous in his temper, he was as easily appeased as offended ; and his natural love of tranquillity indisposing him to change of any sort, particularly if it were to be attended with trouble and contrivance, he would not support any of his wife's proposed measures for his advancement. Perseverance and importunity, though they could not extort his co-operation, at length secured his neutrality ; and, in perfect ignorance of the cabals and manœuvres by which the appointment had been procured, he saw himself ultimately nominated to the important office of Sagan Haccoanim, or second Ruler of the Priests, to the exclusion of others more conversant, perhaps, with the laws and ritual, but less powerfully seconded by court influence.

As Antigonus united in his own person the joint dignities of King and High Priest, and from his dissolute and effeminate character, passed most of his time in the profligate pleasures of his palace, without the smallest dis-

position to exercise the pontifical functions, unless when necessity enjoined it; the Sagan, who was his ecclesiastical Suffragan, or vicergerent, became a person of very considerable importance, and might justly be deemed the second magistrate of the kingdom. Much as this surpassed his own expectations, and even his wishes, it did not satisfy the ambition of his wife; who, having thus rendered her husband conducive to her own ulterior views of aggrandizement, which we shall hereafter have occasion to develope, next wished to make the daughter instrumental to the same purpose. At this time the Pharisees, a turbulent and factious sect, which had more than once rendered itself formidable even to their kings, constituted the popular and most powerful party in Jerusalem; on which account, Salome was anxious to bring about a marriage between one of their leaders, a crafty intriguing character, and her stepdaughter. Malachi resolutely re-

fused to impose any restraint upon the inclinations of his child: Zillah, despising the sect, and disliking the individual proposed to her, utterly rejected his suit: the propounder of the alliance, irritated at this act of disobedience, reminded her of the absolute authority which the Jewish law gave to parents over their children, and haughtily insisted upon compliance. Discord was thus introduced into the Sagan's family at no very long period after his second marriage, and almost immediately subsequent to his being invested with his present dignity.

Thus were affairs circumstanced when Antigonus determined on despatching a secret embassy to Rome. By means of his spies and emissaries, he had discovered that Herod, the rival candidate for the throne, had fled thither; and as he himself had purchased the sceptre which he now usurped by bribing the Parthians, he naturally concluded that the most effectual

method of securing himself in its possession was to buy a confirmation of his royalty from the Romans, not being at this time aware that they had already sold the Jewish crown to Herod. No person appeared to Antigonius more eligible for this delicate mission than the Sagan, not only from his intimate knowledge of the Latin language, but because his high station would render his selection the more complimentary to the Romans; and Malachi himself, who at any other period would have recoiled from a commission so little consonant to his tastes and habits, was induced to accept it by considerations of both a public and a private nature. As a patriot and a Jew, he was most anxious to put an end to the distractions that agitated his country, by procuring the all-powerful interference of the Romans; while he was not the less solicitous to withdraw his beloved daughter from the persecutions of a stepmother who seemed inflexibly and irresistibly bent upon her object; as well as

from Jerusalem itself, which he began to foresee would not improbably be exposed to the horrors of another siege. The massacre perpetrated by Pompey's soldiers, when it had formerly been taken by assault; the atrocities of which he had so recently been an eyewitness, when the Parthians, although they entered the place as allies, had committed every species of excess, and when Antigonius himself had bitten off the ear of Hyrcanus, the deposed King, that he might be disqualified by the mutilation from ever afterwards resuming the office of High Priest—the recollection of these, and a thousand other enormities, instigated him to remove his child from a city in which there was too much reason to apprehend that similar or worse scenes might again be shortly acted. In the present disturbed state of the world, Rome seemed to be almost the only asylum that was secured against the ravages of war; and as he had a kinsman, a pious Jew, and the father of

a large family, settled in that city, it occurred to him that Zillah might be placed in his house, and enjoy the society of his daughters, until the tranquillization of her own country should allow her to return to Jerusalem.

Such were the considerations that influenced him to accept the appointment, and to take Zillah with him,—a resolution which, as it would tend to remove from his journey all appearance of a public embassy, was not displeasing to the King, who wished to keep the whole proceeding as secret as possible. Salome, finding that her husband, so far from being disposed to forward her views of ulterior ambition, would decidedly oppose them, was not sorry that he should absent himself for a time from the scene of action, while she would enjoy in her own person much of the influence to be derived from his high office. Zillah, indeed, she most strenuously endeavoured to retain, that she might bend her

to her ambitious views ; but upon this point the father was inflexible ; and his daughter, terrified at the very thought of being left in the sole power of her imperious stepmother, gladly consented to accompany her parent. All parties had been enjoined not to divulge these arrangements ; but the Sagan, on engaging Simon, one of the Temple porters, who was in the habit of attending occasionally upon his person, and whom he considered a particularly valiant and trustworthy man, had been obliged to state the destination, though not the object, of their journey, charging him at the same time not to reveal it. Simon had been under a similar necessity of communicating it to his wife, who, without any necessity whatever, had imparted it to her friend Dinah, simply satisfying her conscience, as is usual in such cases, by declaring at the time that it was a profound secret. To the widow, who had indeed rightly guessed the object of the embassy thus confidentially imparted to her,

it appeared of much more consequence to clear up the doubt as to the payment of her pension, than to speculate upon the absence of the parties from whom she had usually received it; and, resolving to lose no time in the elucidation of this urgent affair, she hastened to the Sagan's private residence, which was immediately to the northward of the Temple.

On account of the frequent seditions and insurrections occasioned by the great number and turbulent character of the inhabitants, most of the considerable mansions were built for the purpose of defence as well as of domestic convenience, and immured within high walls. In such an enclosure stood the official dwelling of the Sagan, an extensive but low structure of great antiquity, surrounded by a cloister of Gopher wood, completely blackened by the breath of ages. The columns that supported the latter were the trunks of low trees, rudely sculptured at top so as to represent a capital,

but of no very definite configuration. Above the ground-floor there was but a single story, the windows of which, deeply sunk in the solid wall for the benefit of shade, and provided with lattice-work and curtains,—for glass, or at least window-glazing, was unknown,—communicated with a gallery over the wooden colonnade. By means of hooks inserted into the top of the pillars and the opposite wall of enclosure, an awning was extended over the whole of the front court, beneath the shade of which, or walking to and fro within the cloisters, Dinah, at her entrance, beheld a numerous collection of barefooted priests, some of them holding censers, who had come to receive instructions, or make communications respecting the approaching festival. The two Katholikin, or overseers of the Treasury, were comparing their accounts together; the seven Immarcalim, with the keys of the seven rooms of the Temple, wherein the holy vessels and vestments were laid up; the

three Gizbarin, or sub-collectors of the offerings; the various officers of the Consistory; the elders of the Sanhedrim, with the Levites, the overseers of the singers, of the guards, of the seals, of the drink-offerings, of the incense, and other inferior ministrants, all in their respective robes of office, constituted a reverend assemblage which might have well daunted any female of less self-possession than the widow. Making her way with very little ceremony through the priestly assemblage, she hastened to a side-door in the partition which divided the front court from the private dwelling-rooms at the back of the mansion. Passing through this entrance, she was admitted, after a little delay, into the apartment occupied by Zillah. It was up-stairs; and the portion of the gallery into which it opened, being railed off and enclosed, was decorated with flowers and shrubs, so as almost to give it the appearance of a modern conservatory, and to plant out in some

degree the high blank wall that encircled the mansion ; while the back-court beneath it was formed into a little garden of roses, this being a hortulan luxury which had existed in Jerusalem from the time of the early prophets, though groves and larger enclosures were not allowed. She was so busy in tending her flowers when her visitant entered, that she would not have been aware of her presence, had not Dinah burst out in a voice that was rendered energetic by the mingled feelings of selfish alarm about her pension, and real attachment to the child whom she had nursed—" Oh, Zillah, my daughter, my daughter ! for such I shall ever call you, am I indeed to lose you ?—are you indeed about to quit Jerusalem-hakdoshoh, the Holy City, and the Temple of the Lord, of which your father is the ruler,—(I hope his Saganship is well, God bless him, and Amen !)—to go forth among the children of Belial, the accursed Romans, who are worse than the Chaldeans, and

Egyptians, and Ethiopians; and worship an Eagle, as well they may, since they are themselves universal ravagers and murderers, and make every thing their prey!—An unclean bird, my daughter, think of that!—one that has claws, and preys upon carrion and garbage. Oh that I should have lived to see this unhappy day!”—Dinah was so overcome by her bigoted hatred of all foreign nations, and the idolatrous horrors which her imagination had thus conjured up, that she actually burst into tears; and Zillah was scarcely less surprised at this unexpected discovery of her intended journey, than at the emotion which it had excited. A few questions having elicited the source whence the information had been derived, she blamed Dinah for her indiscretion in revealing it; cautioned her good nurse, for so she always termed her, not to divulge the matter to others; and assured her that she had not forgotten her, since she had prepared written orders for her father’s

steward to continue the regular payment of her pension.—“ Bless you, my child, bless you !” cried Dinah, whose tears ran the faster at this proof of kindness and consideration—“ your mother, who is now in Heaven, always promised it should be paid to me till my dying day. I would not for the world say any thing to lower your spirits, especially at such a time as this, but you will never recover the loss of her. Ah ! she was not such another as Madam Salome——”

“ No more of this, good nurse : you can come to me again during the festival, but for the present I must bid you farewell.”—She kissed her with great condescension as she spoke ; but Dinah, who was in vain trying to dry up her tears, and had evidently something else weighing heavily upon her mind, showed no disposition whatever to depart. “ Ah ! my kind and dear daughter,” she resumed, “ it will be a heavy time with me when I can no longer set eyes upon your sweet

face. What shall I do in the dreary days of winter, when you would sometimes come with your handmaids to call upon me ; ay, and would order me a measure of wood, that I might dress my little bit of victuals, and not be cold and comfortless. It was the Feast of the Dedication, I remember, and the streets were covered with snow, when you were last good enough to think of me ; and, welladay ! be as saving as you can, wood will burn, for not a log of it is now left. Heigho !”

“ Before I go, I will order two measures to be sent into your cellar ; so, be of good cheer, nurse ; and once more, farewell.”

“ Blessings ! blessings on your head !” ejaculated Dinah, with a new gush of emotion—“ but the cellar—the cellar——” Her sobs would not allow her to proceed.

“ What of the cellar ?” inquired Zillah.

“ It will hold,—it will hold,—it will hold *three* measures”—blurted out the widow, as

soon as she could find her voice. Zillah promised that it should be filled, and quitted the apartment ; while Dinah took her departure in a state of tears and agitation, wherein it would be difficult to decide whether selfishness, sincere gratitude to her benefactress, or unaffected sorrow and alarm at the prospect of her meditated journey, formed the predominant feeling.

A few minutes after thus parting from her nurse, Zillah encountered her stepmother ; who, having already informed her that she was to be presented at court on the following afternoon, now inquired in what manner she proposed to attire herself. “ In the particoloured robe which I myself worked with flowers and gold thread, and which I wore at the last festival,” was the reply.

“ And which is much such another, daughter, as might have been worn upon holidays by Rebekah’s nurse Deborah, or by the good Rut!

when she went a-gleaning. I have told you, child, that the fashion of such garments has long passed away, and that all people of distinction nowadays adopt the Roman modes. You have too good a figure to be concealed beneath that antediluvian robe. A low-cut tunic, with an embroidered stomacher, and a mantle with a border of gold and purple, would not only display your person to advantage, but give you a modish and a Roman look."

"My father has repeatedly told me that the daughters of Jerusalem should pride themselves in wearing the same garb as their illustrious ancestors, and disdain to imitate the fashions of the Gentiles, especially of their Roman conquerors."

"I hate the idolatrous Romans as bitterly as he does; but I have no quarrels with their modes, or with any that are more becoming than our own; nor do I know why females of rank should wear raiment of the same form as the

wives and daughters of the rabble. And were our ancestors, whom you would make your model, so wedded to the primitive simplicity? Think you, that when Abimelech gave Sarah, then in her ninetieth year, a thousand pieces of silver to buy her a veil, he wished it not to surpass all that had been previously worn?"

"But when it is known that we have a Roman party in the city, would it become the Sagan's daughter——?"

"Psha! fashion is of no party, the mode is omnipotent, and beauty may pay tribute to the whole world in adorning itself, without any imputation upon its patriotism. Prythee, therefore, let me not see you attired like a pigeon-seller's bride on her wedding day, or a vine-dresser's girl at the vintage feast."

"I would willingly obey your wishes, but my father has expressly desired——" Hitherto Salome had preserved a gracious countenance, and a correspondent suavity of tone, which at these

words were succeeded by flashing eyes, reddened cheeks, and a taunting contemptuous accent, as she exclaimed—"What ! is there no other who calls you daughter, and whose wishes and commands it might become you to obey ? Am I ever to be thwarted and disregarded ? Have you not read that Rehoboam's little finger was thicker than his father's loins ? Ponder upon this, proud and unyielding girl ; for you may chance to learn that the intimations of Salome may be less safely slighted than the most imperative orders of others."—So saying, she walked out of the room in slow and scornful state ; while the gentle Zillah, little used to such imperious mandates and menacing looks, followed her, with tears in her eyes, and a heavy heart, that she might communicate what had passed to her father, and receive his instructions how she should act.

CHAPTER III.

ON the following morning, at an early hour, Zillah quitted the house, accompanied by her maids, for the purpose of visiting the bath at Enrogel, near the King's Garden, whither she generally went two or three times in the week. It was her intention, for the sake of the shade, to go round the back of the Temple, to cross the bridge that connected it with Mount Sion, and so down into the Valley by the Water-gate ; but, on attempting to pass by the Pool of Bethesda, she found it in a state of the greatest disturbance. As this was not the season in which the celestial visitant was expected to de-

scend and impart a healing virtue to its waters, a number of sheep and lambs had been driven thither from the adjoining market, that they might be washed preparatory to their being offered at the Temple on the approaching feast-day. The surrounding piazzas were crowded ; many of the affrighted animals were swimming to and fro in the water ; peasants, drovers, and some of the inferior Templar Levites, were loudly wrangling and quarrelling about their respective properties, which it was almost impossible to separate, especially when the distinguishing marks had been washed out ; while dogs, fiercely barking around the margin, or plunging into the pool, in spite of all efforts to prevent their thus defiling it, only rendered the intermixture more inextricable, and increased the general hubbub and confusion. To avoid this tumultuous scene, Zillah turned back, skirted the north of the Temple, and, passing

out of the Sheep-gate, descended into the Valley, along which Dinah had taken such an ominous and inauspicious walk on the preceding day. Some of the annoyances to which the widow had been exposed upon that occasion, were now inflicted upon her young and beautiful mistress, for the weather was still more sultry, the number of votaries, pilgrims, wayfarers, and cattle of all sorts, converging from various quarters, was increased by the nearer approach of the great festival, and the dust from the thronged road enveloped her from time to time in a white and dense cloud. Still, however, she proceeded for some distance, receiving and returning salutations from the numerous passengers who crossed her path, until, almost overcome by the heat, she turned aside to enjoy a short respite beneath the shade of an immense sycamore tree that stood upon the banks of the Cedron, and under whose gigantic boughs there was an

assemblage which seemed to have been collected for some other purpose than that of mere protection from the rays of the sun.

Familiar as was the eye of Zillah with scenes such as that presented to her upon reaching the spot, it was one sufficiently characteristic of the age and of the locality to justify a description. The prominent object, around which the majority of the little crowd had stationed themselves in a ring, was a wild-looking, half-naked young man, whose hairy skin seemed to have been burnt to a hue of the swartest brown by constant exposure to the elements. The hide of some strange animal, belted around his loins, and scarcely hanging to his knees, constituted his only clothing. Around his throat was slung a large bottle formed of a goat's skin, the hair being turned inwards, and the exterior pitched together in such a way that the neck of the animal served also for that of the vessel ; while behind him hung a pouch, or srip, of

wolf's fur, so arranged as that the gaping mouth of the beast became the aperture at top. The stranger's head and beard, neglected and dishevelled, and yet naturally and even picturesquely crisp and curling, displayed one dense mass of dark hair, whose black depths appeared to assume a still deeper hue from the contrast of the chalky road-dust, which had settled here and there upon the outer curls. His features and form, so far as this hirsute investiture allowed them to be seen, were remarkably handsome ; his eyes of surpassing brilliancy, his limbs cast in a mould of the finest symmetry ; and though there was something savage in his look, he exhibited in no respect the aspect of a vulgar ruffian, or of any low-born enthusiast. His gestures and attitudes were graceful ; his voice, though he sometimes muttered, and anon burst into great vehemence of articulation, was far from unmelodious ; and his language was not that of a rude or uneducated person. In his right hand he held a tall

branch of the wild fig-tree, in the fork of which was perched a large bird of the raven species, whose piercing eyes seemed to rival those of its master. Anticipating the cunning device of Mahomet, he had secreted some sort of food in his ear, which was overshadowed by his umbrageous hair ; pretending that when the bird thus fed itself, it was whispering to him the dark revelations of futurity.

A figure of this description, advancing such pretensions, and addressing himself to the credulous and superstitious vulgar of Jerusalem, was tolerably sure, in whatever direction he wandered, to gather an eager auditory around him. As Zillah approached, he ceased speaking ; and having fixed his eyes upon her for some time with an intent and ardent look, that seemed to express both surprise and admiration, he at length slowly withdrew them, and gazed vacantly at the crowd around him. It was indeed a motley group. Here stood a

mother, whose infant, terrified at the wild aspect and frightful bird of the stranger, urged her to be gone, by its averted face and loud cries ; while her older son, though he still clung to her for protection, was anxious to delay her, that he might obtain another peep. There, was seen a little knot of Pharisees, their right hands in their bosoms, their left grasping their beards, offering a striking contrast by the affected gravity of their dress, their solemn gestures, and mortified looks, as well as by the contemptuous incredulity that lurked in their eyes to the band of half-clad Egyptian slaves beside them, each bearing a yoke across his shoulders, from either extremity of which depended a bucket of water, brought up from the Pool of Siloam, while they all gazed with fixed and reverent eyes at the pseudo-prophet. Adjoining to these were huddled together six of the Nethinim, or Templar servants, whose office it was to draw water for the use of the Temple,

and always from the Pool of Siloam. Their buckets, which were marked with the palm and cup, the holy insignia, were placed upon the ground ; while they whispered to one another, and cast indignant looks at the stranger, as if they were scandalized that any but a regular priest should presume to set himself up for a prophet. Opposite to them was a mingled cluster of gazers, where the dark protruded beards and eager eyes of the men were here and there relieved by the softer and fairer character, but not less rapt expression, of female faces. Behind this little knot sate a water-carrier of the palace upon a heavily laden camel, which, protruding its lofty head over the circle, looked supinely down upon the stranger with its meek eyes. A richly clad Sadducee, mounted on a handsome mule, kept himself somewhat aloof, smelling to a small box of perfume, and smiling languidly at the whole scene ; while, still farther removed, two Geome-

tricians, attired in long robes, and holding rods in their hands, were squatted upon their hams, angrily disputing respecting some diagram which one of them had drawn in the sandy soil with his wand.

Zillah was withdrawing from the crowd, when the self-styled prophet, advancing a few paces towards her, exclaimed in a low and gentle voice—"Doubtless, fair maiden, you come up to Jerusalem with your festival friends; when go you hence, and which of the cities of Judæa may boast that among its dwellers it possesses one more beautiful than Vashti, more worthy of the royal crown of loveliness than even the glorious niece of Mordecai?"

"I am a daughter of Jerusalem," replied Zillah, with a distant inclination of her head, and moving forward to leave him.

"And if I might know your name, O fairest of her daughters, and that of the street in which you reside, my heart would learn how

to call upon its charmer, and my feet would be taught whither they should wander."

" These are questions which I answer not to a stranger;—I have perhaps said too much in telling him that I am a dweller in the Holy City."

" Call it not by that inappropriate name," ejaculated the figure, throwing himself into an attitude, and resuming his vehement and rhapsodical intonation—" it is no residence for thee, who art a hind of loves and a pleasant roe ; it is an Admah and a Zeboim, upon which the fire of Heaven shall quickly be poured from every corner of the sky, for its Temple, and its palaces, and its hovels, are sinks of iniquity. Lo ! dost thou not see the angel, the destroying angel of the Lord, already hovering over the proud but guilty city ? Hark ! the thunder bellows in the distance, and it shall soon burst from the sky in a roar that shall shake down the once mighty Jerusalem into the dust from which it

sprang! Listen to me, O ye Israelites! I am called Esau, because I have sold my birthright for a mess of pottage; and the wild man of the mountains, because I dwell among the wild asses and the untamed goats, and hearken to the howling of wolves and the screaming of eagles. Listen to me, for this prophetic bird flies up to the sky at night, and brings me down its secrets, and whispers them into mine ear; ay, the secrets of the past as well as of the future; for it is the same raven that Noah sent forth out of the ark, and which returned to him not."

Abandoning his constrained attitude and declamatory style, — for Zillah, startled by his sudden energy, had hurried away from him, — he gazed after her for some time with a look of passionate intensity; and at length exclaimed, in a subdued and melancholy tone of voice, "Gracious and majestic, sweet, innocent, and noble creature! Such was the

maiden whom I once loved :—she died—she gave her life to save mine—I was sprinkled with her heart's blood ! But I destroyed the villain who was jealous of our joys. I smote him to the earth with my sword—I stamped upon his dead body. Alas ! I might have been happy in my love—guiltless in my life. What am I now ? Away ! away ! away !” Suddenly he lifted up the bough that he held in his right hand ;—the bird fluttered its wings and screamed,—and its wild bearer, as if anxious to escape from his own thoughts, ran with the look and the speed of a maniac towards the Temple.

Zillah, in the mean while, pursued her way to the bath, lost in a variety of conjectures as to the character of the man by whom she had been so strangely addressed, and his motives for wishing to discover her name and residence. Enthusiasts and pseudo-prophets of this description—some the victims of delusion, others

hypocritically assuming a part for interested purposes, and a third kind that hovered between both classes—were common enough in Judæa; but the figure in question did not appear to her to belong to either of these divisions. Spite of his strange garb and wild gesticulations, there was an occasional betrayal of cultivation, if not of elegance, as well as of self-possession in his speech and manner, which forbade the conclusion of his being in reality that which his exterior would indicate,—a conjecture confirmed in some degree by his own statement, that he had forfeited his birthright. Hirsute and almost savage as was his appearance, it was impossible not to be struck with his natural comeliness and symmetry, which, combined with a latent expression of melancholy in his voice and in his eyes, awakened an interest in Zillah that partook both of admiration and compassion, and occasioned her conversation with her maids to turn almost

exclusively upon the subject of the young Esau, the wild man of the mountains.

On her return from the bath, she observed another and larger assemblage in front of the principal eastern gate; and not doubting, from the occasional elevation of the raven upon his lofty perch, that the crowd were surrounding the same figure, she turned towards one of the nearer entrances of the city, in order to avoid him, and not expose herself to farther interrogatories.—“Nay, mistress,” said Deborah, one of her accompanying maids—“do, prythee, let me mingle with the rest, and listen to what he is saying. You can walk home with Rachel, you know, especially as you intend returning by the streets, and I will follow you in a few minutes. I warrant I will find out who and what he is. But, mistress, do you really believe what he says about the raven? it doesn’t look like such an old bird, does it?”

“Foolish girl!” replied Zillah—“what is

it to us who and what he is? The poor creature seems hardly in his right wits; and his fantastical stories, therefore, deserve but little heed."

"I must confess," said Rachel, the other maid, "that I *should* like to know the real rights of the matter about that raven, for they do live a long time, and so I have always heard. At all events, it might be one of those that fed Elisha the prophet, for Cherith is only sixty or seventy miles off, which is nothing for a bird to fly."

"Talk not so idly, Rachel; it is a common raven, which is an ugly and unclean bird, and what does it import us to know its age?"

"But the man himself," resumed Deborah—"nobody can say that *he* is ugly or old either. Perhaps I may learn his whole history. See how the people are crowding about him! There goes the raven up into the air again! and now

he has taken it down. I am positively dying to know what he can be talking about."

"Why, what an inquisitive and prying girl are you become!" replied Zillah. "Well, well, rather than that you should die of curiosity, you may even mingle awhile with the bystanders; but linger not too long, for I am to be taken to the palace this morning, and I shall want you to assist in dressing me. And harkye; good Deborah! if ye must ask questions, make no vain inquiries about the bird; it is even as I have told you, no better than a common crow."

Delighted with the permission thus given to her, the maid, hurrying forward, was presently lost amid the numerous passengers; while Zillah and her remaining companion entered by the Water-gate, and, passing through the streets of the city, soon reached their abode. The ten minutes in which Deborah had promised to be back were nearly extended to an

hour, when she returned, and hastened to communicate to her mistress the intelligence she had gleaned. As to the great object of her curiosity however, although her inquiries had been sufficiently numerous, she had not been enabled to gain the smallest information ; so that her tidings were necessarily limited to what he had himself uttered in his addresses to the multitude. He had predicted, in the most confident terms, the approaching beleaguerment of Jerusalem, and its capture by a cruel and ferocious enemy ; on which account he warned all his hearers, with bitter denunciations against them if they neglected his exhortations, to purchase and carry with them, on their return into the country, all such goods and merchandise as they might have occasion for, and which could only be procured in the Holy City ; urging them to take up and bring away all their own effects, and more particularly to withdraw whatever monies they

might have deposited in the hands of the merchants, or in the Treasury of the Temple, unless they wished their property to become the prey of the conqueror. He was very particular in his inquiries of the respective groups that came up to the gate, as to their places of residence, and the days of their departure ; denouncing, in wild and incoherent rhapsodies, woe, bitterness, and repentance to all those who disbelieved his predictions, or slighted his advice.

This statement was not much calculated to satisfy the curiosity of the informant, or any that might be felt by Zillah herself : but the latter had now little time to meditate upon what she had heard ; for it soon became necessary to make preparations for the court, which was to be held after the daily service of the morning, in order that the ministers and officers who were in rotation at the Temple might be enabled to attend at the palace. After her

painful interview with her mother on the night before, she had hastened to her father, who had expressly enjoined that she should adhere to her original intention of arraying herself in the ancient Hebrew fashion, adding that he should blush with shame, were the Sagan's daughter to present herself before the King and High Priest in the garb of Pagans; and more especially in one which would serve to recall the subjection of God's chosen people, the most ancient, renowned, and valorous nation in the world, to the Roman barbarians. Fortified by this authority, she accordingly wore the particoloured robe, which she had herself embroidered with flowers and gold thread, and of which the sleeves were of the richest gauze, decorated with ribbons and facings curiously sewed together. These were blue, which, being a celestial colour, was in high favour, and much used for cuffs and trimmings; though it was not deemed decorous to have the

whole apparel of this hue, since none more was used about the curtains and veils of the Tabernacle. Her under-garment of fine linen, reaching to the ankles, and bordered also with blue, had been decorated by her own skilful needle with clouded colours, which bore the name of feather-work. Across her bosom was a pectoral of Byssus, a sort of silk of a golden yellow, formed from the tuft that grows on a large shellfish of the muscle species, found on the coasts of the Mediterranean,—for the great ones of the earth had not then begun to rob the silkworm of its covering. Her sandals were of badger-skin leather, secured with golden clasps. Her head-dress was of simple, and, according to modern notions, of not very becoming form; ~~for~~ her black and luxuriant locks, being drawn behind the head, were divided into several tresses, their beauty consisting in their length and thickness, and the extremity of each being adorned with pearls

and jewels, or ornaments of silver and gold, of which latter metal she also wore narrow plain circlets around her wrists and ankles.

Such was the garb of a Jewish damsel of distinction, at a time when rich and even gaudy colours were considered the appropriate accompaniments of rank. Zillah was of a form and figure calculated to confer, not to borrow lustre, whatever might be the character of her habiliments. Her height, which exceeded the common standard of her sex, would have been more remarked, but for the fine proportions of her person ; so that the spectator found it difficult to account for that air of natural majesty which accompanied her steps, and which was at the same time reconcilable with the most modest deportment, ~~an~~ unaffected simplicity of manners, and an evident unconsciousness of her own charms. Her large round eyes, of the darkest hazel, mild as the dove's, and yet deeply fraught with intelligence and sensi-

bility, were surmounted by finely arched brows of black. Some might have been tempted to pronounce her ruddy lips too protuberant and full, but that the gracious and benignant expression which was for ever lambent upon their surface imparted to them a peculiar and ineffable charm. In its outline her face assumed the oval form, the clear warm olive of her soft and delicate complexion being seldom heightened by any fixed roseate hue ; although the smallest emotion occasioned the blood to glow through her thin skin, and enriched her complexion with the mellowest autumnal tints. The expression of her countenance, as we have already intimated, was much too gracious to be termed serious, although it might be pronounced habitually serene and placid.

With some few points of resemblance,—for Salome was still handsome, and of a really dignified presence and carriage,—the mother offered, in her general appearance, a sufficiently marked

contrast to her daughter. Her beauty being evidently on the wane, art had been lavishly put in requisition to conceal the deficiencies of nature and the ravages of time. Her face was painted, her eyebrows pencilled and extended so as to join one another,—one among the many Roman fashions which were then in vogue. Her hair, gathered up in tresses under her veil, and received into a gold caul behind, was confined by a jewelled and embroidered bandelette, which in front assumed the form of a tiara. Immense rings of wrought gold depended from her ears; a large and valuable nose-jewel hung from the middle of her forehead; every finger sparkled with rings; her chains, bracelets, and ornaments, were worthy the magnificence of her Roman dress; small bells of silver decorated her scarlet sandals; and in her hand she carried a costly tablet, filled with perfumes. There was a hauteur in her air, even when she most wished it to express affability and condescension :

no one could for a moment doubt that she asserted her high rank, and challenged her place in society, not less by the splendour of her appointments than the proud confidence of a demeanour flimsily disguised beneath a superficial courtesy. For the present moment, however, all was graciousness ; her countenance wore its court-dress, and was glazed over with those flickering smiles which can so easily be assumed by a practised woman of the world, without their calling up any correspondent complacency of feeling. The imperious mandates and angry menaces of last night seemed to have been entirely forgotten ; nay, she even complimented her daughter upon her good looks, in a tone of amiability which was probably elicited by secret satisfaction at the fancied superiority of her own appearance.

The Sagan, arrayed in his sacerdotal robes, soon joined them ; and, having affectionately kissed his daughter, declared that by the dial

it was quite time to depart. On account of the narrowness of the streets, and the abruptness of the hills, vehicles for the mere purposes of pleasure were very little used within the walls of Jerusalem. There were open chariots, however, for state occasions; and as Salome would not forego any of the distinctions appertaining to her rank, she had one of this description waiting at the gates of the front court. Passing through a long file of servants and slaves, who were always assembled to give *éclat* to her exits and entrances on days of ceremony, she stepped into the carriage, followed by the Sagan and his daughter, and they moved slowly forward towards the western part of the city. The streets were thronged with people, all advancing in the direction of the royal residence; and among them were to be distinguished many of the upper classes, both male and female, some mounted on mules and horses, some on foot, arrayed in their court-dresses, and not a little

solicitous to preserve themselves, by the assistance of the servants who preceded and followed them, from any defilement, annoyance, or derangement of their state habiliments on the part of the mob. Some of these courtiers, particularly the females, were walking under a small baldachin, or canopy, supported by their servants, the whole cortège forming a sort of procession in the middle of the streets, so that their progress was necessarily slow. Thus our party proceeded, cheered with frequent blessings from the multitude,—for the Sagan was deservedly popular,—until, upon turning into a wider avenue in the vicinity of the court, the crowd was observed to be in a state of considerable agitation, and to be visiting some obnoxious individual with opprobrious epithets, and other marks of indignity; while they gathered, somewhat tumultuously, around his carriage. It proved to be a farmer of the revenue, or collector of the Roman tribute-money,—one of that class who,

under the name of publicans, became, shortly afterwards, so especially odious to the Jewish people. As the individual in question had enriched himself by the oppressive exaction of a tax which was considered a most degrading badge of national subjection, he was held in peculiar detestation,—a feeling which was aggravated, at the present moment, by the ill-judged magnificence of the car in which he rode, the general splendour of his equipage, and more particularly by the calumnious imputation of his being an idolater. Having, from his connexion with the Romans, acquired some portion of their taste, he had ventured to import secretly, and set up in his house, two or three of their favourite statues. The circumstance transpired; and the ignorant mob, concluding that he could only keep such objects in his rooms for the purpose of consulting or worshipping them, as Rachel and Michal had done with the Teraphim of old, shouted fiercely out,

“ Down with the idolater, who, like Nebuchadnezzar, and Micah the Ephraimite, dabbles with the Teraphim, and worships false gods.— Stone him ! crucify him ! away with him to the rock ! ”— Their hostility, however, was confined to clamour and vituperation, accompanied by loud hisses and the pointing of fingers ; for the object of their hatred, as if conscious of his unpopularity, had surrounded himself with an escort of armed servants and slaves, who would not have scrupled to use their weapons in their master’s defence, had such a measure been rendered necessary.

CHAPTER IV.

AFTER this trifling interruption, our party arrived without farther impediment at the Palace of the Maccabees, situated to the westward of the town, and exhibiting more the appearance of a fortress than of a residence for the purposes of state and royalty. It was surrounded by a high and massy wall, having piazzas on the inside, and a stone platform on the top, upon which soldiers were seen marching to and fro. Three of the corners of this circumvallation were fortified with turrets; the fourth was surmounted by a lofty and strong tower overlooking the city, upon the summit of which the

Maccabee standard was displayed.* Within the court-yard, close to the gates of entrance, stood a row of large brazen lavers, constantly emptying themselves into a fishpool at a little distance, and again supplied from a capacious reservoir, in order that such of the visitants as had accidentally contracted any ceremonial defilement in their passage to the palace, might purify themselves before they entered it. Here the more scrupulous pretenders to sanctity, and particularly the Pharisees, made a point of washing

* The celebrated Judas Maccabeus took for the motto of his standard the words, “Mi camoca baelim Jehovah?” (Exod. xv. 11.) “Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the gods?” This motto is said to have been written, not at length, but only by the first letter of each word, just as S. P. Q. R. for *Senatus populusque Romanus* was inscribed on the Roman standard. The four initial letters of the Hebrew are supposed to have formed the anagrammatical word *Maccabi*; whence this Judas has been generally called *Judas Maccabeus*, and those that fought under his standard were termed *Maccabees*.

themselves up to the elbow ; the same parties were particularly reverent in touching the sacred inscription on the door-post of the palace, and in pronouncing the accompanying prayer in a loud and solemn tone of voice.

Drawn up on either side of the enclosure were parties of the King's body-guard, mounted on showy horses. These gaudy, swaggering, and effeminate sparks, most of them young men of family, chosen for their personal beauty, and in every respect worthy of the dissolute King they were to defend, corrupted the court by their licentiousness, and intimidated all good people by their occasional ferocity and excess. Their helmets, cuirasses, and back-pieces were of glittering brass, their cuisses and greaves of leather ; their swords hung from a circular studded belt round the loins ; a quiver, bow, and arrows completed their arms, and, in imitation of King Solomon's parade soldiers, their dishevelled and flowing hair was so thickly interwoven with

golden threads, that when the sun shone upon them it irradiated their heads with a kind of glory. The glittering of their drawn swords, the clank of their armour, and the rattling of the Mezilothaim, or little bells hung at the horses' ears, gave a martial effect to the whole body, in spite of the effeminate looks and tawdry embellishments by which it was individually characterised.

After passing through a handsome vestibule, the visitants were ushered into a spacious and lofty hall or audience chamber, the roof of which was supported by square columns of marble, with ornamental capitals of cedar-work. Up to a certain height, the walls were hung with rich tapestry, representing various trees, plants, and shrubs; the remainder of the space to the ceiling was decorated with particoloured arabesque ornaments upon a white ground. On a rich and elevated throne, in the midst of this hall, sate the King, in his royal robes of purple,

wearing a massy golden chain around his neck, and upon his head the crown of Hyrcanus, the first of his family who had assumed the diadem and the title of King. His sword hung at the back of his seat, and a party of the dismounted guard was ranged behind him; for, knowing himself to be an usurper, he was ever fearful of treachery or surprise, and kept himself constantly prepared to defend by violence that which he had snatched by fraud and bribery. In a city like Jerusalem, which frequently had more than twelve thousand priests at a time within its walls, it may be supposed that their holy order would predominate over all others at a court drawing-room. Such was the case now; so that white robes and long black beards encountered the eye in every direction, setting off to better advantage the rich dresses of the secular and civil dignitaries, and more especially the splendid trappings of the females, or of the military officers who were interspersed among

them. Perfumes, of which the Hebrews were extravagantly fond, were fuming from golden censers in each corner of the hall, and almost every female carried some precious ointment in her tablet ; so that the whole atmosphere was suffused with the most odoriferous exhalations. Nor was the ear regaled with a less rich and rare delight ; for the King's band, consisting entirely of select musicians, and provided with male and female singers of the most melodious voices, performed at intervals during the whole ceremony.

On Zillah, to whom the scene was new, and who had lived in a state of almost cloistered seclusion, the effect was like that of enchantment ; and she was too much occupied in gazing with a palpitating wonderment at all she saw, to discover how much she herself was the object of general admiration. But little time was allowed her for that vague and delicious entrancement in which her faculties were at first

absorbed; for when the music ceased, all was again in motion; greetings, merriment, and laughter were heard on every side; and the party was gently impelled forward towards the throne. Armed as he was, and bristling with guards, Antigonus presented a delicate and effeminate appearance: the languor of his voice, the heaviness of his eyes, the wanness of his complexion in spite of the cosmetics with which it was known that he endeavoured to refresh it, all betrayed the effects of his debauched life. His dress was gorgeous, but neither tastefully selected, nor becomingly worn; and he contemplated the whole scene with a look of jaded indifference, from which he was only aroused when any larger cluster than usual approached him. Upon these occasions, he would eye them, as they came up, with a quicker and more penetrating look, as if he suspected treachery; casting at the same time a rapid glance at his sword, or upon his guard. Few met with a more

distinguished reception than the Sagan and his family ; for Zillah's beauty seemed to have aroused Antigonus out of his habitual listlessness. He surveyed her with an ardent and indelicate scrutiny, paid her many compliments on her charms, and added in a whisper, that, had he known what an ornament his court was about to lose, he should scarcely have selected the Sagan for his ambassador, or have consented that his daughter should accompany him. Zillah was glad to be at length dismissed, neither liking the intensity nor the expression of his gaze. Others, however, considered it an honour full of hope and promise ; for the friends and acquaintance of her parents flocked around them with their congratulations ; while some addressed their obsequious flatteries to the daughter, endeavouring to ingratiate themselves with one whom they had already marked down for a royal favourite, and whose friendship it might be therefore prudent to conciliate beforehand.

Among the most sedulous of these adulators was a richly dressed old lady, of whose insinuating and glozing speeches Zillah had for some minutes been a passive rather than a willing auditress; when her mother drew her away somewhat unceremoniously, desiring her to hold no farther colloquy with that low-born personage.

“ I observed nothing vulgar in her language or appearance,” said Zillah; “ but her conversation, I confess, was little to my liking.”

“ I am astonished at her assurance in so familiarly addressing you,” continued Salome, with a look of indignant hauteur:—“ I believe her to be a very respectable personage in her way; but is it for a woman like this, an upstart who cannot trace her family for more than three or four hundred years, to affect an intimacy with *us*? We cannot indeed, like some that are recorded in our sacred chronicles, carry up our genealogy for three thousand five hundred

years; but your father is of the Aaronitish line, and the Asmonæans derive from the course of Joarib, of the first class; so that my ancestors were contemporary with Moses. Is it for this mushroom of three centuries, therefore, to be of your associates? or is it for you, who can trace your pedigree unbroken for fifteen hundred years, to receive her among your friends?"

Zillah protested that she had never felt the smallest inclination so to enrol her, even if the person in question had derived her ancestry from the days of Adam; and was about to add, that, since it was her mother's wish, she should decline her advances, when she was prevented from concluding her speech by the approach of a young and beautiful, though rather diminutive female, who with a dainty and affected air came swimming towards them in a magnificent Roman dress, of which the long train was held up at some distance by a female attendant. Her mincing steps^{*} occasioned the little silver

bells at her heels to give forth a perpetual tinkling sound ; her nose-jewel, which was a costly pear-shaped pearl, dropped first on one side, then on the other, as she conceitedly lolled her head towards either shoulder: her eyelashes had been painted with antimony, which, by darkening and dilating the hair, imparted a peculiar brilliancy to her eyes: with one hand she waved a feather fan so as to display to the best advantage the jewels with which every finger was radiant ; the other held a perforated cassolette, from which she sprinkled cinnamon water upon the floor as she advanced ; while her garments diffused around her an odour of myrrh, aloes, and cassia. Bridling up to Salome, she exclaimed in a lisping voice—" Ah, my dear friend ! how glad I am to see you ! As I live, you look exquisitely to-day ; and you have got the Octavia mantle, I protest,—the last new importation from Rome. You see, the Roman dresses prevail ; none but a few antiquated

dames and old-fashioned formalists adhere to the ancient mode. They have a regard for their garments, I suppose, because they have been bequeathed to them by their grandmothers, He ! He ! That is the Sagan's daughter, I presume ; a fine-looking girl, but rather on too large a scale. And how could you suffer her to be disfigured in that odious robe ? How excessively hot it is ! They say the Pentecost* will be well attended. Does not the King look charmingly to-day ? I never saw him in better spirits."—So saying, and without waiting for an answer to any of her questions, she sidled away, making the little bells at her feet "prate of her whereabouts," and displaying herself to fresh parties as she accosted them in her parade round the hall, and told each of them in an au-

* We have preserved the Greek term for this festival as that with which the reader of the New Testament is familiar ; but the Hebrews called it the Feast of Weeks, because it was kept seven weeks after the Passover.

dible whisper, that the Sagan's daughter, so far from being a beauty, was as tall and large as a Chaldæan idol, or one of the daughters of Anak, had lips like the Egyptian Sphinx, and wore a dress that had been evidently manufactured before the Captivity.

As she had called her mother her dear friend, an epithet which had been received with evident complacency, Zillah took it for granted that this personage at least must be of an illustrious and remote ancestry, and ventured an opinion to that effect. "I know nothing of her pedigree, child," was the reply.—"It is Lydia, the King's favourite concubine, who has more influence in the palace than any other, and disposes every thing as it pleases her."

Unable to comprehend the court morality which could seek friendship with an upstart of this stamp, and yet repudiate acquaintanceship with a respectable female, because her pedigree was comparatively modern, Zillah preserved a

bewildered silence, revolving these strange distinctions in her mind, until her thoughts were most unpleasantly dissipated by the approach of Tubal the Pharisee, whom her mother had so urgently pressed upon her acceptance as a lover, and from whom she herself had ever felt so insuperable an aversion. He advanced drawing down the sleeves of his under-garment, to show that he had washed himself to the elbow, as he entered the palace, the great length and ostentatious singularity of his dress, humble in its materials, and yet eccentric in its fashion, sufficiently attesting that its wearer was a sanctimonious coxcomb, “ a praying synagogue-frequenting beau.” As an evidence that he had been at the morning prayers, he retained across his forehead and his left arm his phylacteries, or parchment labels, containing a portion of the Law, which were of a more than ordinary breadth, as if his holiness and devotion were of a greater magnitude than those of other men.

The tufts or fringes of blue on the four corners of his upper garment, were of such an unusual length that they trailed upon the ground ; and so ingeniously had numerous knots been interwoven with them, that they served to remind him of some hundreds of different precepts of the Law, which he was enabled to repeat by fingering this ancient species of bead-roll as he walked along the streets ; just as a modern Catholic numbers his prayers by the assistance of his rosary. In these knotted memoranda he had inserted sharp thorns, that by pricking him as he walked they might the more pointedly remind him of the Divine commandments ; and he had taken due care so to hold his garment in his progress through the streets, as that the goad should strike against his legs till they drew blood, to the prodigious advancement of his fame with the multitude for austerity, piety, and mortification. Upon his entrance into the palace, however, he suffered these religious sti-

mulants to trail innocuously upon the ground ; for the power of the Pharisees was entirely derived from their factious influence with the lower orders, who looked upon them as saints ; and although Tubal would not omit any of the more common ceremonial observances in the presence of the aristocracy, especially when they cost him nothing, he knew that the favourable opinions of this class would be little conciliated by such palpably hypocritical acts of penance, and he therefore spared himself their infliction. The sour and sanctified countenance, too, which had been most scrupulously preserved during his public progress to the palace, was now exchanged for a smickering leer, as he exclaimed in a soft and fawning voice—" O most beautiful Zillah ! I was weary and way-worn ; for I have toiled even as far as Mount Gareb, to care for the building up of one of the tombs of the Prophets ; and I am fasting, for I taste no food on the sixth day, since on

this day Moses, as you well know, went up into the Mount ; nor indeed upon the third, for upon that day he came down ; but the sight of thee has refreshed me, as the night-dew of Hermon refreshes the wild cummin that has been parched by the sun. O rose of Sharon and lily of the valley ! thou who art fairer than Esther the virgin, or Susannah the wife, or Judith the widow——(I pray thee, step this way, lest I touch Gabriel of Bethzacara, who is coming towards us, for he is a known sinner,—or him that leans upon his arm, for he is a tax-gatherer——) Wilt thou not listen to my suit ?”

“ I have already repeatedly given you my answer,” said Zillah, moving towards her friends, for she had been standing somewhat apart when he thus addressed her——“ and I must implore you to spare me this painful and useless importunity.”

“ Who talks of Lydia, the King’s chosen one ?” resumed the Pharisee——“ her eyes are

sparkling, and her feet are like twin stars ; but compared to thee, she is a scarecrow in a garden of cucumbers. Thou art like a cluster of camphor in the vineyards of Engedi ; thy lips——”

“ I can hear no more of this,” interposed Zillah ; “ let me pass, and visit not mine ears with fulsome flatteries, to which it becomes me not to listen.”

“ Harkye, proud damsel,” said the Pharisee, detaining her and altering his voice——“ as you have an Asmonæan for your mother, she may perhaps have told you that when the Maccabee king ; Alexander Jannæus, lay on his death-bed, and his wife Alexandra was exceedingly troubled with fear on account of the hatred which our sect bore towards her and her family, he advised her by all means to reconcile herself to the Pharisees, as the only method to secure herself upon the throne and win the affections of the nation ; adding, that there were no such friends where they loved, and no such enemies where they

hated; and whether they spoke true or false, good or evil of any person, they would be alike believed by the common people. This she did, and thereby established herself as Queen."

"And why am I to be told of Alexandra's humiliation?"

"To remind you, unthinking maiden, that if you would retain the throne of beauty and good fame upon which you are now seated, it may become you not to offend a Pharisee by refusing the offer of his hand."

"Avaunt, bold hypocrite!" said Zillah indignantly—"I have already told you that I loathe your love, and I have now to add that I defy your menaces!"

So saying, she walked hastily towards her parents; while Tubal, in order to divert the attention of the bystanders, and prevent their noticing the agitation of her looks, pounced suddenly upon a young man who was passing at the moment in a gay garment that had been

brought from Rome, exclaiming in a loud voice, as he grappled the object of his sanctimonious indignation—"O holy father Abraham! O blessed Isaac! O devout Aaron! is it thus that we keep the commandment of Moses? Lo! what have we here? a mixed cloak of linen and wool, which is interdicted to every man unless he be a priest. What! are we to fly in the face of the Law, both of Leviticus and Deuteronomy, which forbid these mixtures lest we fall into abomination by thus mingling together the produce of plants and animals? Know ye not that it is lawful to fall upon an Israelite thus violating the commandment, and to tear him in pieces, even although he were the master at whose feet we sate, and who taught us wisdom? What, ho! my brother Pharisees, and men of Israel! shall we suffer this profanation even in the presence of our King and High Priest? Nay, struggle not, thou shalt not escape. O thou heathenish and obscene trans-

gressor ! O thou seed of Canaan, and not of Judah ! Thou Ishbosheth, thou man of shame !”

At this outcry, a troop of the Pharisees flocked around the culprit ; lifting up their hands and eyes, uttering ejaculations, and assuming such looks of horror that one would have thought some most dire and enormous atrocity had been perpetrated. Priests too of every rank quickly joined the assemblage, all eager to express abhorrence of the crime, as well as to lend assistance in hauling off the linsey-wolsey offender, in their eagerness to accomplish which they jostled and prevented one another, so that their object was not effected without considerable disturbance and confusion.

Scarcely had the bustle occasioned by this incident subsided, when two figures sauntered towards Zillah, offering in their appearance a conspicuous contrast to the demure-looking and precisely clad formalist by whom she had been just annoyed. These were Jesse, a hand-

some young man of distinction, one of the King's favourite companions, leaning on the arm of a friend ; the former a foppish courtier, dressed in the Roman style, affecting Latinisms in his speech, and exhibiting a levity, not to say insolence, in his discourse and manner, which he mistook for a dashing and fashionable nonchalance. His locks were most curiously crisped and curled ; the outside of his beard was plaited from beneath his ears into a fillet, the two ends of which united together under the chin, the whole being plentifully bedewed with myrrh. As the sleeves of his tunic only reached to his elbow, he had decorated his wrists with bracelets like a woman ; and, to distinguish himself from the vulgar herd, he carried a glittering girdle, an article of dress that was hardly every worn within doors, into which he had inserted a perfumed purse and a little scent-bag. “ Salve ! Rab Malachi,” he exclaimed, advancing familiarly towards him—

“allow me to kiss the fifth corner* of your Saganship’s beard.” Putting the extremity of it to his lips, a mode of salutation which was sometimes practised, he continued—“You fully observe the precept, I see, not to cut it; though I cannot say I like stooping so low, for it is apt to make one red in the face. I wonder you can find time to be at court, when you must have so much to do in preparing for the Pentecost. Any news stirring? What has become of Herod? Traitorous knave! where should we find a king to keep up the festivities of the court half so well as the noble Antigonus? Hope the ladies were not frightened by the mob when they hooted and insulted the Exactor Vectigalis. Insolent raggamuffins! they ought to be served as Amaziah treated his Edomitish prisoners. The Exactor is a friend of mine,

* The Jews reckoned five corners to their beards—one on either cheek, one on either lip, and one below on the chin,—all of which a priest was forbidden to shave.

and an excellent fellow, for he imports fat peacocks from the East, Maltese cranes, and wine from the Greek Islands."

Contenting himself with coldly stating that his family had suffered no alarm from the disturbance in the streets, the Sagan turned aside, and addressed himself to one of his friends.—“ Foolish affair this of Tubal the Pharisee,” resumed the courtier, “ to make such an outcry about a linsey-woolsey dress ! As I live, the fellow deserved punishment nevertheless. Cannot conceive how any man of taste could wear a single thread of woollen next his skin. Feel this tunic of mine, Joel : it is of Egyptian linen, woven without seams, a shade coarser than a cobweb, a thought thicker than the filmy gossamér. Didst ever finger one of a more delicate texture ? ”

The obsequious companion declared that it surpassed all that he had ever seen. “ And this pallium,” continued the courtier, “ for I

shall keep my toga for the festival—how like you the Damascus wool? It is of the true dye, the magisterial colour, neither the conchylian, the amethystine, nor the Tyrian purple, but an inimitable intermixture of them all. Eli! what a fine girl spoilt! The Sagan's daughter, I presume?"

Salome, to whom the latter words were addressed, answered in the affirmative, and gladly introduced him. "As I live," continued the fop, "the beautiful Zillah must be of a cruel disposition, both towards herself and others, to enshroud her charms in this antiquated robe, especially when she has before her so elegant and perfect a sample of a better taste. Ah! have you seen the dress lately sent to the Exactor's wife from Rome? A veil of the real opus Phrygium; a pectorale embroidered with bombycina silk, and an exquisite pyxis filled with jewels came out to her in the same box."

Fortunately for Zillah, who was already tired of this coxcomb's babbling, he was beckoned away towards the throne, and presently afterwards numerous servants came round through the hall distributing refreshments. These consisted of snow from Mount Lebanon, preserved since the winter, and flavoured with perfumes, so that it bore a pretty close resemblance to our modern ices;—pomegranate and other light wines, into which spices had been infused; to which were added cakes, and almost every variety of fruit. From these delicacies the Pharisees scrupulously refrained, holding themselves apart in ostentatious observance of their self-imposed fast; and wearing repugnant and distasteful looks, as if the very odour of the passing salvers was an abomination to their nostrils. After the rest of the company had regaled themselves, and been again delighted with the performances of the musicians and singers, they fell into little parties, some amus-

ing themselves with conversation, but the majority, especially those in which the females predominated, were deeply engaged in propounding and solving parables and riddles, forfeits being imposed upon those who failed to discover them. This was a most ancient recreation ; for problems and enigmas, with a similar penalty attached to them, had passed between Solomon and Hiram the King of Tyre, as well as the celebrated Queen of Sheba ; and the custom was still sedulously kept up at every marriage festival. Seldom had it been pursued with more joyousness and hilarity than on the present occasion : merriment and laughter resounded through the spacious and crowded hall ; the eyes of the men sparkled, the white teeth of the young beauties were perpetually displayed, and many a long beard was seen to wag to the accompaniment of a deep-toned chuckle, when a sudden movement and bustle was observed at the remoter end of the hall ; some of the visitants

retiring on one side with demonstrations of surprise and apprehension, others gathering around a strange figure which had mingled with the assemblage, and many voices exclaiming at once—"It is Nabal the Black Shadow ! Nabal the madman ! Nabal ! Nabal !"

Whence this man came, or what was his real appellation, no one had been able to discover. It was but lately that he had been seen at Jerusalem, or rather amid the caves and sepulchres of the valleys that immediately surrounded it, whence he was rarely known to emerge until the dusk of the evening,—a circumstance which, being coupled with his enveloping garment of sable sackcloth, had procured for him the name of the Black Shadow. That of Nabal, a term synonymous with madman, had been bestowed upon him from his habit of wandering about during the night in tombs, caverns, or amid the rocky solitudes, avoiding all converse of man, muttering to himself, praying in the lonely

moon light, or apostrophising the Holy City from the summit of some neighbouring crag, in dark and dread denunciations. How he procured his food, or where he concealed himself during the day, remained a mystery ; but as he sometimes haunted one quarter, sometimes another, he had been the subject of much conversation, and his existence, as well as the names bestowed upon him, were matters of general notoriety. His apparition at court, and in broad daylight, excited a proportionate amazement ; and although some, as we have stated, shrank away from him with a vague apprehension, the curiosity of others so far vanquished any feeling of dismay, that they crowded eagerly around him, not however without evident manifestations of deep and thrilling emotion. His almost gigantic proportions, indeed, would have inspired awe, even if every lineament of his face, and every movement of his limbs, had not been expressly calculated to awaken it. They who have seen

the sublime statue of Moses by Michael Angelo may form some notion of his figure. Time had dug numerous and venerable furrows down his cheeks, and across his broad forehead ; and his eyebrows beetled umbrageously over the orbs that flashed beneath them, like lightning from a dark cloud ; but he had none of the decrepitude of age ; he walked erect ; his hair retained its sable hue ; and his head, seen high above the surrounding crowd, with its profuse locks mingling with his beard, and streaming down to his middle, looked like a rock rising from the ocean, and covered on all sides with dark flowing sea-weeds. Nothing could be conceived of ancient patriarch or prophet more august and awful than his countenance ; while his stern silence, with his majestic and noiseless march, for his feet were bare, imparted to his movements an almost supernatural character, as if some vast and portentous apparition were stalking through the hall.

Many footsteps and all eyes followed him, the whole assemblage now as silent as himself, for the exclamations had ceased, and every spectator seemed anxiously waiting to know what was his purpose, where he would pause in his progress, and what he would utter. Even Lydia, flippant and unabashed as she generally was, felt daunted as she encountered him ; and yet willing to conceal her trepidation beneath an assumed air of confidence, not to say audacity, she broke the thrilling silence by exclaiming in an arrogant tone—"What hideous and horrid man is this, who, in such unseemly garb, dares to thrust himself into the presence of the King? Who admitted him? and why is he suffered thus to sadden our festivities?"

"Sit thou silent, and get thee into darkness, O daughter of the Chaldæans!" said the figure, raising up his right arm, and speaking in a deep and solemn voice—"roll thy gilded locks in the dust, and howl with a doleful cry, thou

who hast sate in the presence of the King, and sang songs to him with a harp; for thou art one of those whose end is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword, whose feet take hold on hell. And ye, O ye vainglorious daughters of Sion, hath not Isaiah forewarned ye that the Lord shall smite ye with a sore upon the scalp of the head, and take away the bravery of your tinkling ornaments about your feet, and your cauls, and your round tires like the moon; and the ornaments of your legs, the head-bands, the tablets and the ear-rings, the rings and the nose-jewels, the changeable suits of apparel, and the mantles, and the wimples, and the cringing pins, the glasses and the fine linen, the hoods and the veils? And it shall come to pass that instead of sweet smell there shall be ill savour; and instead of well-set hair, baldness; and instead of a stomacher, a girding of sackcloth; and burning instead of beauty."

Lydia bit her lips, and endeavoured to toss her head with an air of defiance; but she was silent; she turned pale; it was evident that her heart was sinking within her. Of the surrounding females, some shrank away, some whispered together, some looked angry, and some aghast; all, however, were obviously affected except Salome, who, with an unaltered countenance, said in a low voice to the Sagan: "This is some crazy enthusiast, or solemn fool, who fancies himself a prophet; unless, indeed, it be a traitor, who, like David at the court of Achish, feigns himself to be mad for some hidden and insidious purpose. I will seek the King's servants, that they may drag him forth from the hall." She departed with this intention; when the figure, addressing himself to Zillah, whose eyes were fixed upon the ground, continued: "Be not *thou* abashed and cast down, O pious and worthy daughter of Salem, for such thy looks and garb bespeak thee; not to

thee did I address my warning voice. And yet thou shalt be acquainted with many troubles : a snare is set for thee upon Mizpah, and a net spread upon Tabor ; but thou shalt wear a charm around thy neck that shall save thee from many enemies. Behold her, and blush, ye that are clad in the garments of the heathen. O women worthy to be slaves, O illegitimate children of Jerusalem ! how are ye sunk and fallen ! When your ancestors were in captivity, they hung up their harps upon the willows, for that they would not sing the songs of Israel in a strange land. They sate themselves down by the waters of Babylon, and wept ; while ye, self-branded as ye are, glory in the badges of your slavery, and impiously wear the garments of your idolatrous conquerors, and rejoice and make merry in your Baalitish raiment, even in the bosom of the Holy City. Shall not the Lord visit ye for these things ? shall He not be avenged on such a nation as this ?”

No one ventured a reply ; silence and confused looks were upon the whole assemblage, when Antigonus was seen approaching, leaning on the arm of his favourite companion Jesse, and surrounded by a knot of courtiers. “ And thou, O King,” continued Nabal, shaking at him his forefinger, and elevating his voice—“ art thou indeed a Maccabee, descended from the great and valiant Judas, who put on a breastplate as a giant, and girt his warlike harness about him, and made battles, protecting the host with his terrible sword ; who in his acts was like a lion, and like a lion’s whelp roaring for his prey ? His banner floats from thy palace tower ; but where is his mighty heart, that panted for the sound of trumpets and the clashing of spears ? Lo ! thou art listening to the melody of the lute and the voices of singing women, and feasting with thy courtiers and concubines, even as was Belshazzar when the miraculous handwriting on the

wall glared before his eyes to warn him of his fate, until his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one another with the greatness of his panic. And yet the warriors are making ready the bow against thee. The war-horse shakes his terrible mane, fire-lightens from his eyes, he tosses his foam to the wind, as he paws upon the ringing rock, and calls on the echo to do his bidding. The Roman, who is God's battle-axe wherewith he breaketh in pieces the nations, is making ready to dash thee down from thy throne, and the hour is rushing on when——”

“What ranting rhapsodist, what fustian spouter have we here?” interposed Antigonus, turning pale from the mingled emotions of fear and rage. “Audacious mountebank! thou hast been set on to ape this prophet strain, and beard me in my very palace. Thou art some Herodian, some traitorous knave, whom stripes and chains shall quickly cure of this disloyal

mouthings. Seize me the caitiff, gag him, bind him with cords, and drag him to the guard-house ! ”

As this order was not addressed to any individual in particular, no one seemed disposed to obey it ; and Nabal continued in a calm tone, and with an undismayed look—“ Not by Herod have I been set on, O blind and doomed Antigonus, but by a greater King than thou art,—by Him who puts a seal upon the tides of the ocean by His terrible and glorious voice, and rocks the solid earth in the cradle of the sea, and hushes it to sleep with a south wind, and hangs the moon above it like a lamp, and calls forth the twinkling stars, that they may gaze upon it as it slumbereth. O vanity of vanities ! The Maccabees, have they not built a tomb by Joppa for descendants that shall never be born ? Thou shalt be the last of thy race, and the marble^{*} niches of the sepulchre shall gape for the bodies of those who shall never fill them ;

for Asmonæans who shall neither bear the name nor breathe the vital air."

"Cowards and slaves!" cried the King, casting an indignant look at his irresolute courtiers, "are ye all in league with this traitorous impostor, that ye fell him not to the ground? Then I myself——" He laid his hand upon his sword, and was about to rush forward; when suddenly wavering in his purpose, and looking rapidly behind him, as if he feared some plot upon his life, he shouted out—"What ho! my guards! my guards! Where be these lag-gards? They shall make an Agag of the lying brawler; my feet shall be red with his blood, and the dogs shall eat his tongue!"—Thus saying, he hurried off in search of his guards, for he seemed to distrust all those that surrounded him; and while the assemblage he had left behind were gazing at one another with bewildered looks, not knowing what to say, or how to act, the mysterious author of the disturbance wrap-

ped his capacious mantle of sackcloth around him, folded up his arms, fixed his eyes upon the ground, and stalked slowly forth through a side-door at a little distance from the scene of the occurrence.

Scarcely had he disappeared, when, as they recovered from their surprise, it occurred to several of the group that they should have detained him; for which purpose they were about to commence an instant pursuit, when the King, wielding his drawn sword, and closely followed by his guards, hurried to the spot. Emboldened by the presence of his armed followers, enraged by the public insult he had received, and irritated against his whole court for their backwardness in executing his orders and seizing the offender, he inquired, in a voice of fury, what had become of him, and which way he had escaped. All were now as eager to evince their loyalty, and wipe off the suspicion of being his accomplices, as they had before been paralysed

and passive. They pointed to the door by which the unwelcome visitant had retired. Desiring his guards to draw their swords, and keep close to him, the King rushed through the entrance, followed by his soldiers ; and the greater portion of the courtiers, hastening after them, dispersed themselves through the vestibules, outer chambers, passages, and court-yards, calling out on all sides to arrest Nabal the Black Shadow, in the name of the King. Vain were their outcries, unavailing was the strictest search, fruitless was the proffered reward of Antigonius, who promised fifty golden shekels to the man that should arrest him. Nabal was nowhere to be found ; it seemed as if he had vanished into his familiar appellation, and become indeed the black shadow that he was habitually designated. “ There is treason in the palace ! ” cried the infuriated King, grasping his sword, and looking malignantly around him, as if in search of some object on which to wreak his vengeance—“ this

is a plot of Herod's ; the villain is in league with conspirators, even in my very household. Let the outer gates be closed ; not a soul shall pass till this matter be sifted, and the lurking traitor be discovered."

The royal orders were strictly obeyed. The gatekeepers, on being examined, declared that no such figure had passed either in or out,—a point upon which the remarkable stature, and still more singular garb of the stranger, would not admit of their being mistaken. From this statement a conclusion was drawn that he must be still within the walls ; and a new and more rigorous scrutiny was made into all the most secret recesses of the building, during which none of the visitants were allowed to depart. Strict and unremitting as it was, this search was not attended with any better success than the former. The King, having ordered his guards to be doubled, retired in mingled rage and dismay to his private apartment, whence he

at length despatched his friend Jesse, with authority for opening the gates, and dismissing the court. All seemed anxious to make their escape, and in half an hour the palace wore its ordinary aspect, except that small knots of people were seen gathered together in corners, whispering over the occurrence of the morning, and endeavouring to recall, as exactly as possible, the precise words uttered by Nabal the Black Shadow.

CHAPTER V.

UPON a mind so susceptible and reflective as Zillah's, the occurrences of this eventful day could not fail to make a deep and solemn impression. Much as she had been struck in the morning by the wild character and savage beauty of the youth whom she had encountered under the great sycamore tree, and strange as had appeared the substance, as well as the tone and mode of his address to herself, and his demeanour towards others, there was yet something in the extravagance of his gestures, and the vehemence of his apostrophes, which convinced her that he was merely acting a part for

the moment, though with what design it was impossible to surmise. Other observations, as we have already hinted, corroborated the conviction of his being an impostor—a character on which her recollection could not dwell with any respect. Her curiosity, however, as to his motives for thus disguising himself remained undiminished, especially as the occasional courtesy of his manner, and the graces of his figure, which not even neglect and the rudest accoutrements could degrade, convinced her that he was of gentle, and perhaps of illustrious blood.

Far different were the reflections elicited by the mysterious apparition at the court. The aged and yet majestic Nabal was a being on whom it was impossible to fix a single look without sentiments of veneration, and even awe; to whose calm, yet deep, sonorous, and soul-thrilling voice, few could listen without a transfixed and reverent attention; whose denun-

ciations, whatever might be the event, awoke a solemn response in the heart, because they evidently sprang from a profound conviction of their truth, on the part of him who uttered them. There was no vehemence, no enthusiasm in his manner; calm, grave, and irresistibly impressive, it exhibited every characteristic of veracity. False prophets, indeed, abounded in the land; Judæa had always swarmed with them; and notwithstanding the punishment of strangling attached to this offence, (which was justly considered a flagrant profanation,) it was by no means extirpated from Jerusalem and its purlieus. Sometimes it was exceedingly difficult to decide upon the pretensions of those who laid claim to the gift of prophecy, especially when their predictions, having reference to a future epoch, were not capable of being brought to any immediate test. In these cases, the life and character of the individual, together with the nature of his vaticinations, formed the

sole criteria by which an opinion could be formed as to the validity of his claim ; for though there was a college in the Holy City for the express purpose of training up young prophets, it did not pretend to imbue its pupils with any divine afflatus, but merely to qualify them the better for the reception of inspiration, should they be selected for that honour ; nor was it deemed indispensable that any one exercising, or asserting that he possessed, the power of divination, should have been educated at this institution. To all, therefore, was this high distinction opened. That it sometimes generated a spurious enthusiasm,—that it was arrogated by many who had no title to it whatever, the frequent cautions against false prophets, which are interspersed throughout the Holy Scriptures, sufficiently attest : unfortunately, there was no infallible touchstone, no spear of Ithuriel, by which to ascertain their truth ; so that the question was necessarily left

to collateral evidence and the judgment of individuals.

Weighed by this standard, Zillah saw every reason to conclude that Nabal was indeed inspired with a supernatural insight into futurity, and that his prophecies would receive the seal of accomplishment. Nor let her judgment be impeached, as if a weak and hasty credulity had wrought this conviction. In our days, when so many centuries have elapsed since Heaven conferred this miraculous power, that we may reasonably infer its total cessation, we should have excusable warrant for our scepticism, and for withholding our credence from any self-styled prognosticator until his predictions should have been fulfilled. But at the period of which we are writing, less than four hundred years had elapsed since Zechariah and Malachi, universally acknowledged as inspired prophets, had poured forth their warnings to the Israelites. The subsequent writings, by us termed the

Apocrypha, though they were not received by the Jews as the oracles of God, and evidently wanted the majesty of inspired scripture, kept up the continuous line of sacred narrative, or holy maxims, so as to connect the present with the past; for Ecclesiasticus is supposed to have been written only two hundred years before the time of Zillah; and such books of the Maccabees as had then appeared, related to the exploits of her own family, or at least of her step-mother's, and came nearly down to her own times. Numerous prophets, whose writings have perished, and the legitimacy of whose claims was maintained by some and denied by others, filled up the interval; while the Jews universally asserted the existence as well as the authority of the Bath-kol, or *daughter of the voice*—a name by which they distinguished a continued revelation from God, after verbal prophecy had ceased in Israel. Upon this were founded the generality of their traditions and

ceremonial observances, which they affirmed to have been revealed to their elders, not by the gift of prophecy, but by dreams and visions, or by the secret and mysterious inspiration, which they termed the “daughter of the voice.”

As at this period, therefore, the appearance of a prophet implied little or no deviation from the ordinary course of events, the belief in his predictions was one to which the highest order of intellect might lend itself without any imputation of credulity. Naturally religious, and prone to put confidence in others from the singleness and truth of her own heart, Zillah harboured not a doubt as to the character of all that Nabal had uttered,—a conviction which the mysterious manner of his apparition and disappearance strongly tended to confirm. Why might he not constitute a link of that unbroken chain of prophecy to which we have referred? Who more likely, from the superior age, sanctity, and wisdom stamped upon his features, to

have been favoured with celestial admonitions and whisperings, and to give oral birth in consequence to the Bath-kol, the daughter of the voice? With these impressions, every word that he had uttered in reference to herself had become rooted in her memory, and deeply engraven upon her heart. The import of his speech was at once consolatory and alarming. It was gratifying to know that her adherence to the ancient garb of the Hebrews had found favour in his eyes; it filled her with dismay to be told that she should be acquainted with many troubles, that her path should be beset with snares and nets; again it was satisfactory to receive assurance that she should escape from many dangers; while it was startling to reflect, that he had not assured her final deliverance; and that thus, after passing through many trying ordeals, she might ultimately fall a victim to the enemies she would have to encounter. Enemies! how could she have any—she who had never cherished anger against a

human being,—who had never hurt or harmed a breathing creature? What was the nature of the dangers with which she was threatened?—what were the unrevealed means by which she was to defeat them? These were questions she could not refrain from asking herself, though she knew that it was utterly vain to hope for their solution. Nor could she derive assistance from others, or even enjoy the satisfaction of conversing upon a subject which so entirely absorbed her own thoughts; for the Sagan, however he might doubt their proceeding from a divine impulse, found the denunciations of the Black Shadow, so far as they related to the King, too much in accordance with his own secret misgivings—too likely, from every external sign of the times, to receive their speedy accomplishment, not to feel a deep-rooted conviction of their truth. So perilous a belief, however, he was too prudent to avow, even to his daughter; for he knew that both their lives

might be endangered, should such treasonable insinuations ever come to the knowledge of the cruel and hasty Antigonus ; and he therefore recommended her to be silent, and avoided the subject whenever she ventured to allude to it. As to Salome, she treated the whole occurrence with contemptuous ridicule, as the freak of some half-crazy zealot, who having discovered a hiding hole in the palace, or procured a confederate within its walls, probably a partisan of Herod's, had adopted this device for the mere purpose of frightening the King, or of giving increased confidence to the Herodians, of whom there were many in the town. Zillah's thoughts, from their being thus locked up within her own bosom, became the more intensely, and even painfully, fixed upon this one object : it absorbed every faculty during the remainder of the day, and it was late at night before the busy workings of her mind would allow her to forget herself in sleep.

Radiant and sparkling rose the sun on the following morning, flooding with a golden effulgence the summit of every hill in the direction of Jericho and the heights beyond the Jordan, and shooting its glad beams upon the topmost pinnacles of the Temple of Jerusalem, as if eager to lay its own first offerings of light upon that lofty altar. Proudly, rejoicingly, triumphantly did it usher in the day which began the Pentecost, and call up the inhabitants of the Holy City to celebrate that festival which was to commemorate and render thanks to God for the Law given upon Mount Sinai, fifty days after the coming of the Israelites out of Egypt ; as well as to evince their gratitude to the great and beneficent bestower of all their blessings by solemnly offering up to Him the first-fruits of their harvests. In the stationary cities round about Jerusalem, where the whole collected neighbourhood was lodged and encamped in the streets, he who first awoke in the morning called

out with a loud voice, “ Arise, let us go up to Sion, to the house of the Lord our God ;” when the assemblage began their march. No such summons was required by the joyous and wakeful dwellers in Jerusalem ; for, long before the rocky crests of the eastern mountains had begun to blush with light ; before the priests deputed for that purpose had given notice from the towers upon the city walls that the festival had begun ; before the same glad tidings had been proclaimed from the four corners of the Temple by the loud triumphant clangour of the silver trumpets, shivering their echoes afar off over hill and valley, and awaking a gladsome thrill in the hearts of all who heard them ; the citizens had started from their beds, and were already busy in all quarters preparing for the celebration of the festive day. Streams of people, decked with nosegays and attired in their holiday garb, were passing to and fro in various directions : some hastening towards the

gates, to meet and welcome the friends *whom they expected from the country ; others hurrying to the places they had secured for best viewing the spectacle and the procession ; a third set getting ready their own offerings, and preparing for the part they were themselves to take in the solemnity : all saluting their acquaintance with glad faces, and even strangers wishing one another joy of the happy day. To denote the verdure that flourished around Mount Sinai when the Law was given, every window and door was profusely decorated with roses and garlands of flowers ; from each balcony and house-top white linen was suspended, surmounted by boughs, crowns, or wreaths ; so that, when morning at length lighted up the streets in all their floral garniture, they looked like continuous bowers and arbours, pleached and engrailed with nosegays.

But when the sun was fairly above the horizon, and flooded the valleys with light, as well as the whole amphitheatre of hills by which Jeru-

salem* was surrounded, the spectacle became infinitely more animated and glorious. Every height was thickly studded with men, women, and children : for, though females were not called by the Law to attend the festivals, most of the Jews brought some portion of their families with them, to visit their friends, to witness the spectacle, or to make purchases and sales at the great Fair which was always held during these anniversary assemblages. On gaining the summit of the eminence, the greater part fell upon their knees, or threw up their hands to Heaven, at first sight of Jerusalem-hakdoshoh, the Holy City ; and all sang in chorus a psalm selected for that purpose, of which the distant echoes floated faintly from all quarters at once, filling the air with commingled and indistinguishable, though solemn and impressive, tones of praise and thanksgiving. Having previously taken off their shoes,—for they now considered themselves to be upon consecrated ground,—they renewed the

chanting of the sacred song, and poured down the sides of the mountains, like a living inundation, spreading themselves over the fields, and leaving scarcely a single spot untenanted; while the roads were almost choked up with a moving mass of cattle of all sorts, asses, mules, and camels, with innumerable vehicles heavily laden with first-fruits, and offerings, and merchandise of all sorts. Not only did it seem the convention of a great, numerous, and wealthy people, all converging at one moment towards the one glorious focus of the Holy City, crowned in its centre with the Temple of the One true God; but it might almost have been deemed that the earth herself was a participator in the solemn festivity, and threw up from her inexhaustible bosom the rarest of her vegetable riches, and cried out from her innermost depths, —“ These are my first-fruits,—lay them, O my children, upon the altar of Him who made me.”

A heavy rain had fallen on the previous night,—an unusual, and therefore doubly welcome occurrence on the present occasion,—so that the view of the spectacle was not in any direction impeded by the dust. By the flashing of their weapons in the bright, pellucid atmosphere, it was evident that all these parties were armed,—a melancholy evidence of the disturbed state of the country, and of the general insecurity and distrust. During the celebration of these anniversary festivals, there had been always in the olden times a suspension of hostilities, and a sacred truce, as at the Olympic Games of the Greeks. Moses, indeed, had assured the Hebrews* that, from whatever distance they might come to the yearly meetings, “no man should desire their land” during their absence,—a plain intimation that it should be a period of universal truce ; but this had ceased to be the case even so far back as the Separa-

* Exod. xxxiv. 24.

tion, when Jeroboam set up the golden calves at Dan and Bethel, to deliver the ten tribes from going up to Jerusalem to worship; and, in the times of which we are writing, the convulsions occasioned by foreign and domestic war were such as abundantly to justify the precaution adopted by the parties now trooping up to the celebration of the Pentecost.

As these various groups descended into the valleys, and came near enough to be separated from the general mass, it was seen that the majority of them were arranged in companies of four-and-twenty persons, marching in an orderly and ceremonious manner. An ox appointed for the sacrifice, with a crown of olives on his head, and his horns gilded, preceded them, and a player on the flute led the procession as it advanced towards Jerusalem. The first-fruits, varying from a fortieth to a sixtieth part of the produce, consisted of wheat, barley, grapes, figs, apricots, olives, and dates.

Each man carried a basket,—those of the rich being of gold or silver filagree-work ; those of the poor of wicker, and all hung round with flowers, as well as turtles and pigeons for offerings. As they drew near to Jerusalem, the citizens came out to welcome and to salute them ; when the whole assemblage walked in pomp towards the Temple, singing songs.

It had been intended that Antigonus himself should officiate, upon this most public and important occasion, in his character of High Priest,—a duty which political considerations imperatively called upon him to perform, for the illegitimateness of his tenure rendered it indispensable that he should court popularity ; and the Hebrews, attaching greater consideration to the proper discharge of the sacerdotal than of the regal functions, yielded a much more devoted allegiance to the first minister of God, than to the chief magistrate of his people. Conscious of this fact, Antigonus was most

anxious to ingratiate himself with the nation by assuming the pontifical robes ; but his fears and suspicions outweighed all the dictates of policy. Impressed with a conviction, from the occurrences at the court, and the mysterious disappearance of Nabal, that there were conspirators in the city who only waited a proper opportunity for making an attempt upon his life, he shrank from exposing himself in his capacity of High Priest ; and more especially from trusting himself within the walls of the Temple, where he could not be accompanied by his guards. Assigning, therefore, the plea of sudden illness for the non-performance of his sacred duty, he had sent orders to the Sagan, on the night before, desiring him to officiate as his vicegerent, and to explain the cause of his compulsory absence.

Nothing could be more acceptable than this arrangement to the ambitious Salome, who had projects of her own for advancing her husband

permanently to the dignity which he was now to assume for the day, and who was most anxious, therefore, that he should present such an appearance to the people, and discharge the functions which he was now to exercise, (for the first time upon a festival,) in such a manner as to win favour in the public eye, and evince his competency for the office. As it was contrary to custom that any female should be present at the time of his investiture by the priests, she retired with Zillah to a strong fortress called Baris, overlooking the Temple, within which the Asmonæan princes had fitted up a vestry for the better preservation and security of the sacred habiliments; and waiting in an adjoining apartment till the ceremony had been completed, she had at length the pleasure of seeing the Sagan in his pontifical state robes, upon which she gazed for some time with evident complacency, and

even assisted with her own hands in arranging them in the most becoming manner.

Although somewhat deficient in height, the Sagan's figure was by no means wanting in a reverent and becoming dignity; for his dark beard was of a venerable length, his countenance grave and impressive, his general appearance such as might well beseem the solemn magnificence of his vestments. Unsolicitous of dignities and distinctions, he felt rather depressed than elated by the gorgeous vestments in which he was clad:—recollection suggested, and his apprehensions brought the warning home to himself, that, in the present times, high posts had been seldom unaccompanied with danger; and the look of thoughtful anxiety which sate upon his brow, intimated that he felt his distinctions to be at least as perilous as they were honourable. Not such was the character of Salome's countenance: her eyes sparkled, her head was

held erect, and the corners of her mouth were drawn down with a triumphant expression, which sufficiently attested the ambitious thoughts passing through her mind, as she feasted her eyes with the badges of spiritual sovereignty in which her husband was arrayed. As for Zillah, she no longer looked upon the Sagan as her father, but as the High Priest of the Hebrew nation, the first minister of God ; and her filial feelings merged in religious reverence. The awful name of Jehovah inscribed upon his forehead ; the mystery attached to the Urim and Thummim of the breast-plate, of which the precious stones had so often been miraculously illuminated when the Lord chose that method for declaring his oracles ; the holy Ephod, recalling that which Gideon had made, and which the Israelites had idolatrously worshipped ; the tinkling golden bells with which the bottom of his robe was fringed ; the solemn recollections suggested by every portion of the

dress, not less than by the grandeur and sanctity of the office itself,—all conspired to imbue her naturally religious mind with such a deep sentiment of veneration, that she withdrew her eyes and cast them reverently upon the ground, as if she stood in the presence of some superior being.

The priests now entered the apartment, that they might accompany the Sagan to the Temple ; when Salome and her daughter betook themselves to one of the galleries of the sacred building, in a situation which commanded a view of the eastern entrance, through which the greatest number of the people generally came up to worship. The various companies that had now assembled under the walls of Jerusalem having wreathed their wheat-sheaves with lilies, crowned their first-fruits with garlands, and decked them out in as much pomp and glory as they could, entered the city in procession,—each division having a banner, on which was inscribed the

name of the town or station to which the party belonged, each individual wearing a wreath of flowers, and the whole being headed by some of the chief men, high officers, and treasurers of the Temple. As they passed through the streets, the shopkeepers and inhabitants of all ranks, as well as those in the balconies and upon the house-tops, stood up and saluted them. The pipes continued playing before them till they came to the Mount of the Temple ; when every man, without distinction of rank, took his basket upon his shoulder, and went forward till he came to the court. The sacred music then struck up, and the Levites sang the first verse of the thirtieth Psalm. At its conclusion, the offerer made his confession from the twenty-sixth chapter of Deuteronomy ; and when he came to the words, “ A Syrian ready to perish was my father,” he cast down the basket from his shoulders, and held his lips, while the priest took it up and waved it hi-

ther and thither towards the four quarters of the earth, to intimate that the whole world was the Lord's, and that from every corner it should send up to him its first-fruits. The chapter being recited to the tenth verse, the offerer placed his basket before the altar, worshipped, and went out. The turtles, or pigeons, were left as an offering: the fruits themselves belonged to the priests of the course that was then in service: the party who brought them was obliged to lodge in Jerusalem all the night after he had presented them, and the next morning he was allowed to return home.

In the open court, at a small distance from the east end of the Temple, stood the great altar of the burnt-offerings,—a large pile of unhewn stones, in order that no architecture might be employed but that which God's own hand had wrought. It was about sixty feet on each side at the bottom, and forty-five at the top, to which there was an easy slop-

ing ascent on the east side, the four corners being surmounted with horns. Around this were gathered the animals selected for sacrifice, consisting of bullocks, rams, lambs, and kids, for burnt and peace-offerings, over which the silver trumpets were solemnly blown as they came up to the altar. At the appointed hour, a band of priests stationed beyond the altar, and looking towards it, so as to face the court, blew their trumpets, first giving a long plain blast, then a blast with breathing and quaverings, then a long blast again, as a signal that the service and the thanksgivings were about to commence; and a deep silence having immediately pervaded the whole assembled multitude, the numerous choir of sacred musicians, consisting mostly of the Levites in their silken stoles, the players upon the harp, clarion, and hautboy, the shawm, the dulcimer and the psaltery, the cymbal, pipe, and tabret, came forward from the interior of the

Temple, performing a grand and cheerful chorus upon their instruments ; and moving along the court in a slow dance at once joyous and majestic, they at length arranged themselves on either side of it. The exquisite skill with which they played, — for every performer was devoted from early youth to the particular instrument which had been allotted to his family for a long succession of generations, — combined with the graceful and stately movements of the dance in accordance to the music, filled the bosoms and animated the looks of the spectators with a manifest delight.

To these succeeded the male singers, who came forward in a numerous band, chanting an anthem, celebrating the Deity and His bounty ; their cultivated voices, embracing every variety of age and tone, swelling and melting and dying away together, sometimes filling the air with a loud sonorous fulness of grave sounds, then subsiding into gentle mellifluous

cadences, and preserving at all times a rich, ravishing, and symphonious harmony.

The anthem was concluded, their voices were hushed, and, after a short pause, soft music was again heard floating from a distance, which, as it drew nearer, was found to proceed from the female singers, the daughters of the Levites, who advanced in a separate company, striking their small portable harps, and warbling a hymn in sweet and low-voiced plaintiveness. Suddenly they smote their instruments with a sharp sound, and, falling back to the right and left, discovered a company of female dancers, some of whom began playing upon a sort of tambourine provided with shells, which rattled as the instrument was whirled round in the air ; others had small bells in their hands, which they used like the modern castanets ; and the whole moved together for some time in a solemn and decorous dance.

The priests of the Temple, who were ranged

at their desks, like a numerous choir, on either side of the court, now chanted the service for the day, selected from such portions of the Law and the Prophets as had especial reference to the festival.* It was divided into several portions; at the end of each, the music struck up: after this had ceased, the trumpets blew a flourish, and the priests resumed their singing. The Jews having imbibed the strange notion, that the gates of Heaven would be opened to him who answered *Amen* with all his might, the whole immense multitude chanted this word, at the conclusion of every prayer, with such a stentorian energy, that the solemn roar of their innumerable voices, reverberating from the lofty front and encircling walls of the Temple,

* The lessons for the first day of the festival were, Lev. chap. xxvi. ver. 3. to the end of the book, Jer. xvi. ver. 19, to ver. 15. of chap. xvii. Those for the last day of the festival were, Numb. chap. i. 1. to chap. iv. ver. 21. Hosea chap. i. from ver. 10, to ver. 21 of chap. ii.

sounded like a rolling peal of thunder, and seemed even to shake the very foundations of the sacred edifice.

At various times, the Sagan, in his pontifical robes, had come forward to officiate in the solemnities, according to established usage ; and when at length the tinkling of the bells upon the hem of his garment announced that he had retired into the Sanctuary to make offerings upon the altar of incense, the whole mass of the people sank down upon their knees, and with their faces upturned to Heaven, reverently joined him in ejaculatory whispers, or silent mental devotion.

It is impossible to contemplate any vast and condensed assemblage of people without an involuntary feeling of awe, either from a sense of its irresistible though quiescent power, or perhaps from that opposite impression of its evanescency and absolute nothingness, which made Xerxes weep at the reflection, that in a

few years the whole of his mighty host would be dust. If such be the effect of an ordinary multitude collected for any trivial purpose, how sublime must have been the sensation produced by the spectacle of a whole people gathered together, not only from all parts of their common country, but from remote settlements and colonies, "coming out of every nation under Heaven," (as the apostle says, speaking of this identical festival at a later period,) and thus falling upon their knees together as one congregation, and sending up their voices in worship towards the dwelling of that Deity, who had singled them out from the whole earth to be His chosen people, and the depositaries of His revealed Will.

That the reader may picture to himself the more vividly the scene we have been attempting to describe, let him bear in mind that on account of the frequent ablutions and purifications prescribed by their Law, the Jewish

commonalty either wore garments of white, or of the natural colour of the unbleached wool ; and that, although they had no habitual covering for the head, they considered it a mark of respect to the Deity to wear a hat during their devotions. This was of the Grecian form, such as Antiochus Epiphanes had first compelled the chief young men to wear, as the Maccabean history relates. Those who were unprovided with this appendage wrapped their heads in their mantles. Imagine the contrast offered by these white dresses, and the bronzed and bearded visages of their wearers ! Even in our northern latitudes, and in spite of their physical deterioration, we see that the Jews exhibit the most marked and striking physiognomies : what must they have been in the days of their glory, and in such an assemblage as this, where there were countenances cast in nature's noblest mould, and burnt to every variety of deep and rich tint by the different sunny

climates of the East, and every chin was dignified by the badge of manhood, from the dark glossy curl of youth, to the white and long-flowing beard of age, and every lineament wore the impress of a fervent, and even passionate devotion !

What a spectacle must this have presented to the mind of Zillah, sensitive as it was at all times to impressions of grandeur and magnificence from without, and to religious whisperings from within ! The innumerable multitudes crowding the courts and galleries ; the priests in their white garments ; the Levites and their daughters at a distance, disposed into separate companies, some playing on instruments, others singing and dancing in a grave and solemn manner ; the victims surrounding the altar, on the top of which was blazing the sacred fire, that fire which having originally come down from Heaven upon Solomon's sacrifice, and having been renewed in the same

miraculous manner after the Captivity, was now, sending up a long undissipated column of smoke towards the sky, as if to unite earth and Heaven together;—the tremendous peal of the people's voices as they shouted “Amen!” the sight of her father in the pontifical robes, with the awful inscription encircling his forehead; the fumes of the incense escaping from the altar of the invisible Sanctuary, and stimulating the imagination as to what was then passing within the interdicted Holy of Holies; the noble back-ground of the Temple, sombre and gigantic in the massiveness of its Egyptian architecture; the solemn religious and historical associations connected with it; the Maccabee standard upon its lofty summit, which the awe-stricken zephyrs seemed to keep broadly and steadily displayed with their wings, that the sunbeams might emblazon the sacred name of Jehovah, inscribed upon it in gold

letters;—can it be a subject of wonder, when Zillah was gazing upon this most magnificent, affecting, and sublime scene, that the tears should unconsciously roll down her cheeks, that her bosom should heave with irrepressible emotion, that she should sympathise with the enthusiasm of the multitude, and join their exclamation at the conclusion of every prayer with a loud and vehement ecstasy?

In an exhortation with which the Sagan terminated the present ceremonies of the morning's service, but which was of course only audible by that part of the assemblage immediately surrounding him, he reminded them of the purposes for which this solemn festival was instituted; recalled to their recollection their departure out of Egypt; the miraculous passage of the Red Sea; the forty-five days that elapsed before their arrival at Mount Sinai;

the two days when Moses went up to the Mount, and reported to the people the message of God, and the three given to them to prepare for his coming down among them, which completed the fifty days from the first passover to the giving of the Law; and admonished them to be grateful for such an inestimable benefit, conferred upon them, to the exclusion of the rest of the world, by the Deity himself in His visible presence and glory. He then adverted to the blessings they enjoyed in the promised land, flowing as it was with milk and honey, where the hill-tops were covered with vines, and the valleys replenished with fatness, where the ploughman overtakes the reaper, and the sower of seed him that treadeth out the grapes; and reminding them that they themselves were the first fruits of the Lord, he urged them to evince their gratitude by offering to Him a portion of His

bounties, and faithfully bringing up to the Temple the first-fruits of their harvests ; finally, he pronounced a solemn benediction upon the people, and retired into the sacred building.

CHAPTER VI.

To prevent confusion from the perpetual ingress and egress of such a prodigious multitude, the people were instructed to go out by the side gates of the Temple, those of the east and west being left for the principal points of entrance. It is pretended indeed by the Rabbinical writers, among the other miraculous privileges of the Holy City, that no accident ever happened, nor was even the smallest inconvenience ever experienced, from the crowding together of such immense numbers, at the annual festivals, within the comparatively narrow confines of the sacred building. If such

were the fact, it is surely more reasonable to attribute it to the precaution we have mentioned, although Salome and Zillah, even with the benefit of this arrangement, found considerable difficulty in making their exit; since, as it was forbidden to eat on a festival before the time of noon, all those who had completed their offerings, many of whom had been journeying from an early hour, were naturally anxious to reach their lodging-houses, or have access to the refreshments they had brought with them, and deposited with their friends, that they might break their fast. In their impatience to attain this object, there was occasionally some pressure and a little confusion at the gates, to the infinite displeasure of Salome, who forgot that all parties assembled for the performance of a common duty, considered themselves to be equal in the eye of the Lord, and therefore felt privileged to jostle the Sagan's wife herself, in spite of her gorgeous

habiliments, if she happened to come in contact with them as they made their way out. At length, however, they both reached the outer court, and proceeding slowly along the streets, which were still thickly thronged, they entered their own residence.

Overcome by her emotions, and the deep impressions of the solemnity she had been witnessing, Zillah was little able to participate in the repast that had been provided for them, and retired to her own apartment, where she remained for some time meditating upon what she had seen and heard, contrasting the assemblage she had just left with the gaiety of the brilliant court on the previous morning, and occasionally reverting to the mysterious Nabal, whose figure and whose predictions were seldom long absent from her mind. Descending from her chamber, after having for some time indulged in these reveries, she betook herself to the little garden of roses, formed in

the enclosure of the back court, in the midst of which a large hemisphere had been hollowed out of the stone pavement, which being marked with degrees, and having a column in its centre, constituted a sun-dial. It was of great antiquity, having, according to tradition, been formed upon the model of the dial of Ahaz, whereon Isaiah had wrought the memorable miracle, by making the shadow of the sun suddenly go back ten degrees. The recollections suggested by this circumstance accorded with the present tone of her mind, while they were vivified and embodied by local association. From the spot where she stood she could see the hill upon which the Assyrians were encamped when the destroying Angel slew their mighty host in one night by a blast of the south wind, and Sennacherib fled to Nineveh in dismay:—as she gazed upon the dial, she beheld in imagination the dying Hezekiah bending his pale features over it, and with

starting eyes intently watching for the appearance of that prodigy which was to assure him that fifteen years would be added to his life ;— she conjured up also before her mind's eye the prophet himself, pointing to the receding shadow, unconsciously assigning to the creation of her fancy the figure and the form of Nabal ; and she recited to herself, in the abstraction of the moment, the song of thanksgiving which the recovered king had composed upon the occasion, and which he sang to the stringed instruments in the house of the Lord.

So completely were her faculties absorbed in this day-dream, that she did not notice the approach of her mother, until she suddenly started on hearing her exclaim,—“ Truly, daughter, methinks you are already sufficiently dark and tawny without thus standing unsheltered in the sun, muttering to yourself, like one of the monthly prognosticators at the city gates. Wish you to be as swarthy as an

Egyptian water-carrier, or one of the daughters of Ham? If you must needs stare at the stone pavement in the noon-day sun, are there not slaves and servants enough whom you might order to hold a canopy over your head? Go, seek your maids, Rachel and Deborah, and desire them to bring the canopy of byssus with the green fringe. I purpose walking down into the Valley, and if it suits you to put on your wimple, and to cease poring on this dazzling pavement, I shall be glad to have your company." — Notwithstanding the taunting tone of this speech, to which Zillah was now pretty well accustomed, there was such an unusual appearance of kindness in the concluding invitation, that she hesitated not to accept it, and went immediately to command the attendance of her maids. The canopy, which was very gaily decorated, constituted a sort of oblong umbrella, supported at each extremity by a long crooked cane, which the

servants held as they walked behind their mistresses.

Thus defended against the heat of the sun, Salome and Zillah went down into the Valley of Jehoshaphat, which was still crowded with people in all directions, some making their way towards the Temple in companies, with their first-fruits, cattle, and music, as we have before described ; others walking singly with their loaded baskets hung round with garlands and doves ; while the numerous parties who had completed their offerings, and returned from the Temple, were seen scattered about upon the declivities of the Mount of Olives, in the Garden of Gethsemane, under the sycamore trees on the banks of the Cedron, or wherever shade was to be found, sitting in circles, crowned with flowers, and regaling themselves with great glee upon the provisions they had brought with them for that purpose. A few, who had been more provident, or were better enabled to afford the

luxury, had supplied themselves with tents, which being pitched upon the banks of the brook, with little banners flying at the top, assumed a very gay and picturesque appearance ; while the parties enjoying themselves within side, as they sent the echoes of their cheerful songs floating down the stream, became the envy of many a heated and weary pilgrim, who was still trudging forward under the weight of his basket. Carts, waggons, caravans, and vehicles of all sorts, were dispersed confusedly about, but more especially on the margin of the rivulet, for the conveniency of watering the cattle. Many of these carriages, containing merchandise for the approaching fair, remained unladen, for the first day of the festival was always observed as a Sabbath, on which it was unlawful to do any regular work, although the preparation of food, or any thing that related to the due observance of the festival, was fully allowed. Asses, mules, horses, and camels, were huddled

together in the scanty shade of these vehicles, eating their provender ; swarthy slaves and half-naked drivers, being interspersed among them, outstretched upon the ground in sleep. Excluded from the benefit of the shade by these more powerful occupants, the little flocks of sheep, which some of the peasants had brought with them for the fair, were gathered together on the outside, holding down their heads in a circle, that they might afford to one another the comfort of a meagre shelter from the burning rays, while the quick motions of their tails, and the frequent stamping of their feet, attested their impatience of the flies that were assailing them. The dog, in whose custody each of these separate flocks had been left, knew his duty too well to imitate the example of his master, or of his fellow-servants, by falling asleep ; but having secured to himself a sufficient portion of the shade, he kept his eye steadily upon his charge, as if with a grave sense of the trust confided to

him, though he never exposed himself to the sun, unless when it became necessary to prevent his flock from intermingling with others.

Salome and her daughter were proceeding along the Valley, and had nearly reached the road leading to the principal eastern gate, when they found themselves deprived of the shade from the canopy, and on looking round, the maids were seen still holding it up as they loitered behind, but their heads were turned on one side, as if in fixed gaze upon some distant object, while they were talking together so rapidly and so earnestly as not to hear Salome's voice calling to them, in no very subdued tones, to come on. "How now, ye negligent and saucy sluggards!" she at length exclaimed, as she struck one of them on the shoulder with her fan; "is it thus ye mind your duty? Are we to give you of our flock, our floor, and our wine-press, with silver shekels besides at every new year, that ye may leave me to scorch in the

sun, while ye send your wanton eyes gadding after gapesights and mountebanks?"

"Nay! mistress," replied Deborah, adjusting the canopy so as to shelter the parties for whom it was intended, "we were only just looking at Esau, the wild man of the mountains;—not that we can get a peep at him—I wish we could;—but don't you see a large bird upon a bough, above the heads of the crowd, yonder by the eastern gate? Well, that's his wonderful raven. There it goes—flap! flap! flap! Well, it must be a monstrous strong bird, if it's only half so old as he pretends."

"I'm sure, mistress," added Rachel, "I thought we were holding the canopy right over you all the time; but I was just saying to my fellow-servant, Deborah, said I, as sure as ever there are fish in the Jordan, yonder is the wonderful raven, and I warrant his master is beneath him. What a thousand pities it is that such a handsome young man shouldn't be

spruced up, and dressed like a decent Israelite, and made a little tidy ; for if he were, I 'm sure he would be as comely and as genteel-looking as Jesse himself, or any of the fine courtier sparks that go parading about the streets."

"Cease this impertinent babbling," said Salome ; "follow me, and give more heed to your duty, or ye shall dearly rue your negligence. Overbold wenches that ye are ! the jubilee year, that once set ye all free to flout your betters, is no longer observed, and if it were, this is not one of them. At your peril repeat this negligence and disrespect !"

Zillah did not choose to explain to her mother, especially in her present chafed mood, the fabulous history attributed to the raven, nor the character assumed by its owner ; but as her curiosity made her anxious to gain some farther insight, if possible, into his real objects, she was not sorry when Salome voluntarily turned her steps towards the crowd surrounding

him, which was collected immediately under the precipitous sides of the Mount. No sooner had the maids ascertained the direction she was taking, than they ran the risk of offending her by their eagerness to press forward, as much as they had done by their previous loitering. Standing on tiptoe, and peering first over one shoulder, then over another, they trod repeatedly on Zillah's heels, and had she not cautioned them by a silent look, they would probably, by offering the same indignity to Salome, have induced her, in the petulance of the moment, to turn instantly homewards. Avoiding this casualty, they drew near to the knot of gazers, and could already hear the elevated voice of Esau, though his person remained enveloped by the encircling auditory. At this moment, the retirement of a horseman from the party occasioning a momentary opening in its ranks, Zillah's eyes encountered the dark bright orbs of Esau, who had no sooner caught a

glimpse of her, than he started back with apparent surprise, and even dismay, pierced suddenly through the surrounding people, and scudding rapidly away under the walls, presently disappeared behind the projecting cliff of Ophel, not less to the surprise of those who had been previously listening to his discourse, than of Zillah, who had so unaccountably scared him from his post.

“ Well !” exclaimed Deborah, forgetting all considerations of respect in the bitterness of her disappointment—“ was there ever such a strange creature, to serve us such a shabby trick as this ? Just as we had got up to him too !”

“ The most ungentlemanlike behaviour I ever beheld,” added Rachel ;—“ I really took him for a decent person ; but I see now, that he is no better than a vagabond.”

“ Silence !” exclaimed Salome, casting at them a look of angry reproof. She again walked forward, while Zillah accompanied her,

almost unconscious of her movements, for she was lost in reveries. That Esau, or whoever the figure might be, had distinctly seen her, and probably recollected their previous interview under the sycamore-tree, she could not doubt, for their eyes had too unequivocally encountered ; for the look of alarm, however, that accompanied this recognition, for the instant and agitated flight that followed it, she was utterly at a loss to assign a motive. The dark forebodings of Nabal came across her mind, and she could not help surmising that this strange man was in some way to be instrumental in the troubles with which she was destined to struggle ; but these were shadowy and vain conjectures, unsusceptible of any distinct configuration, although she could not altogether dismiss them from her thoughts. When they had previously met, this strange figure had been most anxious to detain and converse with her ; now, the very sight of her seemed to fill him with ap-

prehension—a contradiction so inexplicable, that inadvertently giving utterance to her thoughts, she ejaculated aloud,—“ How extraordinary that he should thus fly away, as if he dreaded my approach !”

“ *Your approach, child,*” exclaimed Salome ; “ more likely that he caught a glimpse of some jailor, and fled, lest he should make acquaintance with the dungeon in the court of the King’s prison, the proper home of these cheats and false prophets ; for such, I see, is his character. Every festival are we now pestered with such wild vagrants and ranting impostors as this young scamperer, and Nabal the Black Shadow ; for both of whom the pillory and the stocks were too slight a penalty, since their offence might well warrant their being stoned to death.”

“ But if Nabal should be, indeed, a true prophet—— ”

“ Tush ! child ! talk not so weakly—the seal

was put upon the mouth of prophecy when the youth Malachi died. No angels of the Lord have appeared since, to stand beside the prophet, as they did in his time ; and it were a perilous folly to yield credence to the ravings of the crazy Nabal. Did he not prate, in his idle and fatuous wanderings, of some troubles wherewith you were to be assailed ?”

“ He did, indeed, and his forebodings have dwelt most heavily upon my mind.”

“ Simpleton ! have you forgotten what the Lord said to Jeremiah ?—‘ The prophets prophesy lies in my name ; a false vision and a divination ; a thing of nought, and the deceit of their own heart.’ Lay this to *your* heart, and let me hear no more of these credulous fooleries, which would disgrace a Galilean peasant.”

Thus rebuked, Zillah held her peace, and they proceeded in silence until they reached the Water-gate ; when passing under the bridge that connected the Temple with Mount Sion, they

continued along the narrow ravine by which the city was intersected. Skirting the waters of Gihon, and passing the Tower of Ophel, the King's house, and the Middle-gate, until they came to the gate of Sion, they entered it, and made their way to that part which was called the City of David, stopping at last before a large mansion, surrounded with a wall. At the open gates the owner's servants were seen distributing alms, in rather an ostentatious manner, to a crowd of cripples, mendicants, and sick people ; and tables were spread out in the court-yard, at which others of the same description were regaling themselves. By the blessings which they loudly invoked upon their pious and generous benefactor, Zillah learnt that this was the residence of Tubal, the Pharisee, who had adopted this public method of displaying his charity, for the purpose of ingratiating himself with the lower orders. She was not a little surprised at her mother's bringing her to his dwell-

ing, and felt an equal degree of repugnance against entering it ; but it was now too late to recède ; nor did she wish to give offence by starting objections, which would probably be deemed fastidious, and perhaps impertinent.

Leaving the servants below, Salome and her daughter entered the house door, which, as well as the posts on either side, was profusely covered with written extracts from the Bible, and proceeded up-stairs. Astonished as Zillah was at the sounds of merriment and loud laughter which reached her ears as she advanced, she was still more amazed on entering the apartment, to which her mother escorted her, at finding that they proceeded from a large party of Pharisees, dressed in all the sanctimonious and precise foppery of their sect, with Tubal at their head ; while Lydia, the King's concubine, and other painted and tawdrily dressed females, who seemed to be of the same stamp, were interspersed among them ; the whole company being busily

employed upon a splendid repast. All became suddenly silent as the unexpected visitants made their appearance: the men resumed their customary sour, mortified, and woe-begone looks, occasionally casting suspicious glances at one another, and then at Zillah, as if to inquire the meaning of her introduction; while the women, after a momentary pause, began to giggle, and then burst out a-laughing in malicious enjoyment of the confusion of their companions.—“You are welcome,” said Tubal, advancing towards his visitants with a lackadaisical expression of visage, compounded partly of solemn suddenly-assumed demureness, and partly of confusion:—“we have said over our Shema Israel, our phylactery sentences, from day-break till sun-rise, as well as the eighteen prayers of Esdras; we have been up to the Temple of the Lord to worship, and have offered the best of our increase, the top of every heap, the flower of the wheat, and the first of our mint, cum-

min, and aniseed, from our gardens in the Valley ; we have given alms to the poor, and food to the hungry ; we have thrice washed ourselves from every ceremonial impurity ; and the fast being now over, we were refreshing ourselves with viands and innocent cheerfulness, as it becomes all good Israelites to do on this auspicious day. The pious and worthy Saganess does honour to our repast by her presence ; she is welcome to share our homely cheer, and not less so is the virtuous and the beautiful Zillah.”

Lydia gave a toss of the head at the conclusion of this speech, and throwing a scornful glance at the object of Tubal’s eulogy, said in a loud whisper to one of her female companions, “ If the Sphinx were as large, it would be quite as beautiful.”

“ We came not to share your *homely* cheer,” said Salome, laying an accent upon the term, and eyeing the rich viands with a derisive smile ; “ we have already broken our fast ; but I had

occasion to consult you upon an affair of some moment, which I thought might excuse my intruding myself thus uninvited."

"Call it not intrusion," replied Tubal in a fawning accent, and with a corresponding servility of look; "for the Saganess must ever be the most welcome when least expected. Shall I attend you to my oratory?"

Salome bowed acquiescence, and they left the apartment, greeted at their exit by a half-suppressed giggle from the females. After passing through two chambers, they came to a study fitted up with books, where Zillah was desired by her mother to remain until she returned to her, which would not be long, as her consultation with Tubal would only last a few minutes. Zillah accordingly seated herself at a small table on which were lying several collections and treatises on the traditionary law, both in Chaldee and Hebrew, with marginal annotations, which appeared to have been

written by some recent expositor, if not by Tubal himself. She had been for some short time occupied in perusing them, when the Pharisee entered, unaccompanied by her mother, and shutting the door after him advanced towards the table. "You are well and wisely employed, fair maiden," he exclaimed, "for it is the study of these oral traditions, not of the written law, which is all obscurity and darkness without them, that shall alone entitle the reader to the blessings of another world. The words of the traditional law are joy to the heart, and health to the bones; the Bible is as water, the traditions are as wine and hippocras; the scripture is as salt, but the oral rules are like sweet spices and the oozing honeycomb."

"I cannot so consider them," said Zillah calmly, not wishing to exhibit any apprehension at the non-appearance of her mother; "for that which is written cannot be mistaken or perverted, whereas men's memories may be

treacherous, or their passions, prejudices, or evil designs may make the Deity speak whatever they themselves wish."

"Not so, my lovely Zillah, for you must be well aware that when Moses descended into his tent from Mount Sinai, he repeated first to Aaron, then to Ithamar and Eleazar his sons, then to the seventy elders, and lastly to all the people, the traditionary law which he had received from Heaven at the same time as the written. This oral law, Moses, on his death-bed, repeated to Joshua, who delivered it to the elders, they to the prophets, the prophets to the wise men, who have handed it down unimpaired to our times."

"Such, I know, are the doctrines of your sect," said Zillah. "Perilous as they appear to me, I pretend not to attempt their refutation, but my reason forbids me to believe them."

"Let it not forbid you to believe *my* asser-

tions when I declare to you, you whom my soul loves, you who are beautiful as the full moon, you who are like a roe or a young hart upon the mountains of spices, that if I offended you yesterday at the palace, I am sorry for my transgression. The Saganess has sent me that I might entreat your pardon."

"If you can obtain your own forgiveness, you may be assured of mine," said Zillah coldly ; "our conference, therefore, need not be prolonged. I will rejoin my mother."

"Nay, flee not from me thus, like the hind from the panther, for you will soon be afar off, beyond the great sea, among heathens and idolaters, and I would fain have a promise from you, ere you depart, that at your return you will listen more favourably to my suit."

"Hope not for any such promise. I have already given you my answer more than once. It is final, irrevocable, unalterable."

“How fair and how pleasant art thou, O love, for delights! my heart is caught in thy dark locks, as a stag is entangled by night in the thickets of Engaddi!” Fixing his gloating, half-shut eyes upon her as he spoke, he took her hand, and was pressing it tenderly, when Zillah, snatching it from him, and recoiling as if she had been touched by a serpent, exclaimed, “Avaunt! thou art hateful to my sight! presume not to lay thy hand upon me—dare not come a step nearer—offer not to prevent my departure from this chamber—Hypocrite! I command thee to stand aside.”

Calm and placid as was the general demeanour of Zillah, there was a latent spirit and innate dignity in her temperament, which, when once elicited, imparted a corresponding character to her countenance, and plainly testified that she was as resolute when aroused, as she was sedate and gracious in her ordinary

mood. Cowering beneath the energy of her tones, and the decision of her look, the Pharisee drew back abashed, his lips pale, and his features quivering with suppressed rage, though he endeavoured to conceal his wrath beneath a forced and fawning smile.

“ Fair damsel, you do me wrong, and, I doubt not, you will live to regret the injury,” he exclaimed in a soft tone, but at the same time with a malignant sneer, which seemed to intimate that his rejected love might be exchanged for hatred, and future revenge afford him some consolation for present disappointment. Dark as was the expression of his countenance, it was but transient ; his lineaments almost instantly resumed their habitual demureness and servility, as he exclaimed to Salome, who now re-entered the apartment, “ Truly, the daughter partakes not the gentle spirit of the mother : she is as a wild and fierce bird coming out of a dove’s nest. I have sought to make peace

with her, but verily she is quick to anger, and entreateth me despitefully."

"Heed not her petulance, good Tubal," replied Salome; "Zillah is young and thoughtless; when she becomes of more discreet years, she will know better than to offend the leader of the Pharisees. Doubt not that you will find her, at her return, more acquiescent to your wishes."

"This I hope, for my own sake," said Tubal, "and still more for hers." There was an equivocal smile upon his countenance as he uttered the last words, although their import, and the tone in which they were pronounced, imparted to them a menacing character. Zillah disdained to make any reply. To her great relief the Pharisee almost immediately left the room; Salome departed from the house, without repassing through the apartment in which the company were assembled; and she was delighted to find herself again

walking in the streets of Jerusalem. Her mother, having desired the maids to keep at some distance behind, while they walked in the shade of the houses, reproved her daughter sharply for what she termed her affected prudery, desired her to be less distant and repulsive in her manner, and warned her that an offended Pharisee was the most implacable and deadly of all enemies. “ Would you have me conciliate such a man as my friend ; above all, would you have me receive him as a husband ? ” inquired Zillah.

“ Child ! child ! may you not love his power, though you love not the man ? In our rank of life, marriages are made for more important considerations than the momentary phantasies of a love-sick girl. You know not how you may advance your family by conquering your groundless repugnance to the powerful Tubal.”

“Is not our family already illustrious by high dignities? When will you deem it sufficiently advanced?”

“When there is nothing above us!” exclaimed Salome, speaking in a triumphant tone, and throwing her arm above her head, while her eyes sparkled and her cheeks glowed with ambitious anticipations. Suddenly recollecting herself, however, she continued in her usual voice: “I spoke but at random; these are idle dreams; but your compliance with our wishes, touching this affair with the good Tubal, should he remain in the same disposition at your return from Rome, is not the less essential to the prosperity of your race, and perhaps to your own safety.”

Wishing to avoid a subject which had already proved a too prolific source of altercation, Zillah made no reply, but walked on in silence, though her thoughts were not

the less busily occupied. That an unusual degree of confidence existed between Tubal and her mother was manifest, by her having communicated to him the intended embassy to Rome, which all parties had been so strictly enjoined to keep secret. What could be her motives for this intimacy; what the subject of their recent conference; why she herself had been taken to his house, only to be exposed to his fulsome and offensive solicitations; and why her safety should be endangered by refusing him,—she could not possibly conjecture. His enmity, and, perhaps, his malignant machinations, on account of her rejection of him, she saw, however, every reason to apprehend: probably they would constitute a portion of those trials and troubles which had been predicted by Nabal; but she was, at all events, about to quit the scene of his insidious intrigues for some months,

and it reconciled her the more to her projected journey, when she reflected that it would at once remove her from the importunities, as well as the vindictive designs, from the love, as well as the hatred, of the detested Pharisee.

CHAPTER VII.

“COME, my child,” said the Sagan to his daughter on his return next morning from the Temple, “I have completed the service of the day, gladly do I again see myself attired in my plain robes. I am chilled even to numbness, by standing so long barefoot upon the cold marble; let my sandals be brought, and I will walk down into the Valley with you. Perhaps it may restore warmth to my feet, which, for want of early practice, are not yet reconciled to the frigid pavement: at all events, we may behold the innocent recreations of the people, which will assuredly impart new

warmth to my heart.” Zillah hastened for his sandals, and herself fastened them on, when they proceeded into the eastern valley, following nearly the same direction that Salome had taken on the preceding morning, though the scene was now altogether changed. Tents, stalls, booths, and arbours formed of boughs, were thickly scattered along the banks of the Cedron; the various vehicles and carts had been all unpacked; the multifarious merchandise they had contained was temptingly displayed in every variety of material and arrangement; the cattle were enclosed in pens for the purpose of sale; the valley was thronged with people decked out in nosegays and crowns of flowers, and the business of the fair had begun. Nor were pleasure and amusement less actively pursued: music, songs, and hymns, sounded on every side; parties were dispersed in all directions, entertaining, or regaling themselves; and under the shade of trees, various

companies were seen dancing to the cheerful notes of the pipe, the sackbut, and the timbrel with its rattling shells. At the same moment were heard the rich-floating melodies of the sacred band accompanying the dancers in the Temple ; for, though that portion of the service was concluded which required the presence of the High Priest, the festive solemnities were still continued. “ These are, indeed, goodly sights and pleasant sounds,” exclaimed the Sagan, while a benignant smile diffused itself over his features :—“ The Holy City is glad with the greeting of friends, and the cheer of hospitable entertainment in all its streets ; the Temple echoes with sacred songs, and the music of the dancers ; the valleys and the hillsides round about it repeat the happy strains ; the poor and the slaves are participators in the general gaiety and enjoyment ; the universal air is filled with the jocund sounds of mirth and glee. This is indeed to obey the dictates

of the sweet Psalmist of Israel: 'To be joyful in the Lord, to serve him with gladness, and come before his presence with a song.' "

"And look, my father," said Zillah, "at yonder column of smoke from the altar of the Temple, how majestically and unbroken it arises, illuminated by the sun-beams, but undissipated by the wind! May we not consider this a token that our holy festivities are acceptable, and that the Creator looks down with complacency upon the happiness of his creatures?*" "

"Such, my child, is, doubtless, the most welcome worship we can offer to Him who, through Moses, has termed these banquets a "rejoicing before Jehovah;" who, when he named them festivals, meant them to embrace every description of pleasure and gratification that

* It is maintained by the Talmudists, that the rains never put out the fire of the altar, nor did the wind ever prevail over its pillar of smoke.

could be united with, and sanctioned by, religion. Of a truth, ‘cheerfulness is the best hymn to the Divinity.’”

“And yet many of our Pharisees and zealous,” said Zillah, “object to the innocent recreation of dancing; nay, there are not wanting some, who even hold it to be sinful.”

“If they cannot indulge in it themselves, or even behold it without improper feelings, let them not judge others by their own prurient imaginations. They who have more religion than their neighbours on the outside, have generally less within. Moses has, in numerous places, most expressly commanded us to rejoice and praise the Lord with songs, cymbals, and dances; and there never can be sin in obeying what the Divine messenger has so distinctly enjoined. All the most solemn and awful events of our history have been thus accompanied. The damsels of Israel danced around Miriam after the miraculous passage of the Red

Sea : David himself danced before the Ark on its induction into the Tabernacle ; the yearly festival in the neighbourhood of Shiloh, was celebrated in the same manner ; the Holy Scriptures make frequent reference to similar observances ; and they, therefore, who would condemn that practice as sinful, which has been commanded as laudable, must first prove that Moses was an impostor, and that they themselves are the real oracles of truth.” *

“ Perhaps, also,” said Mariamne, “ it was intended by this cheerful recreation, with its accompanying songs and music, to promote fellowship, brotherhood, and a kindly acquaintanceship between all our tribes, when they assembled together at these anniversary merry-makings.”

“ Nothing so likely, my child, to promote

* The reader, who wishes to see this subject more fully treated, may consult the Commentaries of Michaelis, art. 197.

happy intermarriages, and universal harmony, as the song, the dance, and the sociality of these festive assemblages. Far, far from us be all austerity and gloom, utterly repugnant as they are to the spirit of our religion, and evincing the basest ingratitude and disobedience to the object and the author of it. Who can doubt the joyous nature of our sacred institutions, when he reflects, that, including the Sabbaths and the three high festivals, Moses has appointed us to observe eighty-two holidays in the year; while he has enjoined us to keep only one stated fast, on the tenth day of the month Tisri? It is because I know the cheerful intentions of our religion, that I am exhilarated,—delighted by the congenial scene with which we are now surrounded.”

The gratification experienced by the good Sagan was, indeed, radiant in his countenance; nor was it diminished by the cordial salutations with which he was greeted as he advanced, for,

independently of the reverence with which he was viewed as a dignified priest, he was respected in his private character as a man of charity and benevolence. Some diminution of his complacency became observable, however, as he approached a party of young men, attired after the Greek fashion, wrestling, racing, and playing at quoits. "Let us walk on one side, my daughter," he exclaimed: "yonder are a party of Hellenists, and no true Israelites. They are the youths of the Gymnasium, that heathenish building, first set up by the wicked High Priest Jason, who introduced the fashion of wearing the Grecian hat, and so corrupted his fellow priests, that, neglecting the duties of their ministry, and the sacrifices of the Temple, they contended for the prize in those ungodly places of exercise. Raca! a curse upon his memory! These are the sports of foreigners and idolaters, and entice away our young men to follow heathen customs. Our fathers had no

such diversions. They were a laborious and a warlike people, who confined themselves to the pleasures of the country, and to the festivals of the Lord ; to their religious journeys, and their enjoyments in the Temple. They knew nothing of these perilous novelties ; they abhorred the customs of the Gentiles ; even in their recreations they were distinct and different from all other people."

" But I have been told, my father, that these sports have long prevailed among us."

" Alas ! too long. They were made known to us by the Greek successors of Alexander the Macedonian, who seduced us from the primitive simplicity of our manners, when we were subject to their sway. The Romans now threaten to increase the abomination, and having first conquered us by their arms, may finally corrupt us by their vices. We see how their fashions already prevail ; and the fatal day may perhaps be not far distant, when the chosen people may

imitate the Pagans in their games of hazard, their field sports, their theatres, their combats of men and beasts, and even in their idolatrous statues ; nay, when the Holy City itself may be profaned with hippodromes and theatres.”

By this time they had reached the first line of the stalls, tables, and booths, open in front, but mostly covered with boughs at top, as a defence from the sun. In one quarter were displayed the fruits and products of the country, dried and fresh, such as grapes, figs, apricots, olives, and dates ; pomegranates, pompions, and cucumbers ; oil and honey, butter-milk and cheese, with corn and wine of all descriptions ; several of the venders recommending their own commodity, and illustrating its superior qua-

* This apprehension was speedily verified, for Herod the Great, who succeeded Antigonus, built a theatre to the west of the Temple, a hippodrome upon Mount Sion, decorated them with statues, and instituted all sorts of games, in imitation of the Romans, who had made him King.

lities by a reference to the Jewish history. “ Look at these grapes, my brethren of Jerusalem,—there ’s a cluster ! nearly as big as that which Caleb and Joshua gathered by the brook of Eschol, and which they were obliged to carry upon a staff between them ! Behold these figs and pomegranates, my masters ; they are still finer than any gathered by the spies ! Here are true gourds, none of the wild sort ; buy them and try them, and there shall be no death in the pot, as there was at Gilgal ! He who hath a boil, and would be cured like King Hezekiah, let him buy my figs ! Who will buy the last of the old olives, the king of trees ; the tree of which Jonathan first spoke to the Shechemites ? Here is the rich honey of Hebron ; take it, dip the end of your rod in it, as Jonathan did, and you shall find it sweeter than the honey of Bethavan ! He who wants genuine oil, such as that which the children of Asher dipped their feet in, let him come to me ! ”

Exclamations of this nature were heard in different directions; the sellers seeming to think that their wares would command a preference, if they could once awaken some historical or religious association in the minds of the patriotic and pious sons and daughters of Jerusalem. Others, however, deemed the place whence their merchandise was alleged to be brought, a sufficient passport to the public favour; affirming, with much earnestness, that they had fruits and fine linen from Bethshan; that theirs were the only real rose-cakes from Damascus, or oil-cakes from Samaria, or Egyptian syrup, or bananas from Rosetta; the sole genuine balsam from Jericho, and myrrh from Arabia; the true, unadulterated wine from Helbon, which was in such high request with the merchants of Tyre; or of Sorek, made from the yellow grapes; or of Lebanon, from its southern side; or from other places equally celebrated for their vines. In all probability, very few of these ar-

ticles had travelled quite so far as was pretended ; but they were at liberty to bestow upon their wares what fine names they pleased ; and if the purchasers thought that they tasted the better on this account, the sellers perhaps argued, as many do in our own times, that the transgression of strict truth, which thus benefited both parties, was no very heinous offence. It obviously promoted trade, for the shekel, the bekah, and the little silver gerah, (somewhat more than our modern penny,) were carefully withdrawn from many a leathern girdle ; and the stalls, we have mentioned, were surrounded with men, women, and children, whose more elegant and metropolitan attire and countenance, contrasting with the rustic garb, and sunburnt visages of the peasants, would have afforded a striking subject for the pencil, had Jerusalem possessed any artist competent to delineate it.

At a little distance were the handsomer tents and stalls set up by the trades-people of the

city, many of whom had written up their names in the front, and attached a bough or a streamer to the top, so that their booths made no very remote approximation to those of a modern fair. The clothiers, the braziers, the salesmen, and artisans, who inhabited the narrow streets at the north end of the town, had here collected every description of manufacture which might be serviceable to those who were returning into the country. Pottery of all sorts, hand-mills, and others to be turned by asses, kneading-troughs, wine-presses, and vats for the approaching vintage, assortments of cutlery, particularly implements of agriculture, bows, arrows, and swords for the defence of the cultivator; dresses of every variety, looking-glasses of mixed brass and silver, ointments and perfumes, and various other articles, were displayed in a profusion that drew around them crowds of country residents and peasants, some purchasing, some admiring, and others obtain-

ing what they wanted by barter. “ Who wants any Tephilim ? who wants a Totaphoth ? who wants phylacteries and talismans ? ” cried out a dealer in those articles, whose stall exhibited a collection of knick-knacks and medical curiosities, and who, in recommending his superstitious rolls, did not scruple to assert that the Deity himself wore them on his wrist and on his forehead. “ Who wants a Mezuzoth for his doorpost ? Who will buy a Teffila for the head or hand ? Here are some with the whole Decalogue inscribed within them ; and others with the names of angels ; and here are some at a cheaper rate, to hang about the necks of your cattle, as infallible preservers from all harm. Every letter was written by a regular scribe, educated at the College of the Prophets, so that I can warrant each phylactery to be a genuine amulet.”

Most of the auditors were already provided with a charm of this sort for their own protec-

tion, but some of the country people purchased of his cheaper goods for the preservation of their four-footed favourites, and were seen immediately to hang them around the neck of an ass, a mule, or a camel, for very few were provided with horses. "Here is the egg of the screamer, the daughter of the desert, that lives with the serpent," continued the same individual, producing an ostrich's egg fashioned into a drinking-cup; "it is formed, as you see, into a little bowl, fit to be used by any father of a family at the Passover dinner; ay, or by any individual here present who may wish to buy it, and fill it with Mount Carmel wine from the opposite booth, which I can vouch to be of praiseworthy quality.—And now listen to me with all your ears, my fellow-countrymen, ye, at least, who have half-a-shekel in your girdles; for behold, here are leaves from the great rue plant growing in the palace at Machærus, which is as tall and as well spread as any fig-

tree, and one single leaf is a sovereign remedy for all internal complaints. But this is my wonder of wonders, far surpassing the celebrated Moly of Homer, and the Circea of the Greeks—the magical root Baaras, brought from the borders of the Dead Sea, and an infallible cure for those who are possessed with devils. It is certain death to whoever touches it, while yet growing in the ground; wherefore we tie a string around it, fasten the other end to a dog, and let him draw it up. The dog dies instantly, but the root may be ever afterwards handled with safety, even as you now behold me twisting it around my thumb.” This ancient quacksalver, for such he might be deemed, boasted that he had, among other charms and medicaments, the broiled liver of a fish, the fumes of which would drive away devils, as had been proved in the case of the angel Gabriel; enchantments against the bite of serpents; drugs to facilitate childbirth; and many

a nostrum that might indeed be termed a panacea, if his own avouchment were to be received as a sufficing testimony of its virtues.

“ Let us keep on the banks of the brook, my child,” said the Sagan, “ for yonder are some soldiers of the guard playing together with staves. I like not those gaudy and dissolute youths, nor do I admire their sport. It savours too much of the gladiatorial practices of the Gentiles, and such games are too apt to end in brawls and bloodshed; as when Abner and Joab caused twenty-four young men to play before them by the pool of Gibeon, each at last caught his fellow by the head, and thrust his sword into his side. That which bears even the semblance of enmity and anger can be no fitting pastime for the festival of fellowship and love.”

“ Yonder scene is more in accordance with the happy time,” said Zillah, pointing to a party of swarthy, half-clad water-carriers and

other slaves, who, after having been plentifully regaled by their masters, were engaged together in a sort of burlesque dance, throwing themselves into the most fantastical attitudes, clapping their hands, or mocking, mowing, and jibbering at each other, while one of their companions played on the huggab, or Hebrew organ—a rude instrument, resembling Pan’s pipe.

“ The Lord be with you ! ” exclaimed a poor woman, stopping suddenly before the Sagan, as if she had some communication to make.

“ The Lord bless thee ! ” he replied. “ Can I do aught to serve thee ? ”

“ Blessings on your Sagan’s head ! you may serve me, and many a poor woman besides, if you would only lower the price of doves in the courts of the Temple ; for there are many of us that can afford nothing better for sin offerings and for ceremonies, and there’s so little money stirring since the pillage of the

Parthians, that we must either fail in our duties, or half starve our families. Before Hircanus was carried off, there was a talk of lowering the price a gerah the couple ; but, alas ! we hear no more of it now.”

“ It rests not with me, my good woman, or your wish should be immediately granted ; but this trifle may, perhaps, enable you duly to make your offerings without distressing yourself or your children.” Taking some silver from his girdle, he put it into the hand of the applicant, who departed with many thanks, when the Sagan continued to his daughter—“ This is an abuse which must be looked into at my return. I have been told, that some of the Templar Levites, who have extensive pigeon-houses in the country, themselves supply the sellers sitting in the court, and have leagued with them not to lower the price ; while others take a rent from the dealers in salt and oil and frankincense for the offerings,

for their stalls that are set up within the precincts of the Lord's house. It is a grievous desecration, the correction whereof I will assuredly urge upon the great Council."

The Sagan having encountered a friend, was engaged with him at a little distance in deep conversation, and Zillah was occupied in adding her mite to the relief of the poor woman, when a voice close to her ear exclaimed, in gentle and even tender accents, "Hosannah! God save you, stateliest and most lovely of the stag-eyed daughters of Jerusalem!" and upon looking round, not without a start of surprise, she beheld Esau, the self-styled wild man of the mountains, gazing upon her with a fond and intent earnestness. "Beautiful maiden," he continued, "might I but know the tribe to which you belong, the name of him whom you call father, or even that of the street in which you reside, I should carry with me into the desert something that would

awaken a paradise in my heart, by calling up the memory of the happiness I now enjoy."

"Peace be with you, stranger! take my kind wishes for your welfare, but seek not to know from whom they come, for it beseems me not thus to proclaim myself."

"Speak on—speak on! O music-breathing wonder! even though you deny my prayer, for your accents soothe my ear, as outpoured oil assuages the troubled waters of the lake Gennesareth. My heart was like a young bird, panting and fluttering at the cry of the falcon, but in your presence its sorrows and alarms are hushed, as if an angel's wings were brooding over it. Nay, turn not from me, nor leave me, till you either grant my request, or say that you forgive me for having urged it."

"You need not my pardon, for you have given me no offence," said Zillah;—and at this moment the troop of wondering followers that usually dogged the heels of the wild figure

to listen to his ravings, having overtaken him, and beginning to collect around him, he turned towards them, threw himself into an attitude, resumed his ranting tone, and uttered a few vehement and incoherent apostrophes, at the conclusion of which he exclaimed, " Behold ! I am Asabel, who was as light of foot as a wild roe,"—when he darted off with a speed that fully justified his assumption of the character.

How strange is this ! thought Zillah to herself : but yesterday, he fled away as if the very sight of me had inspired him with terror ; to-day he gazes upon me with looks of kindness, and accosts me in language of passion and hyperbole. Why should he be thus anxious to know who and what I am, since he talks of soon returning to the desert, of which, indeed, his wildness, his speed, and his savage garb, seem to render him the more fitting inmate ?

Her father now rejoining her, they proceeded

along the banks of the Cedron to the extremity of the booths and tents, when they turned back, the Sagan complaining that the tenderness of his feet, benumbed as they had been by the cold pavement of the Temple, prevented his walking any farther. At one of the little shops, Zillah stopped to purchase some trinkets, to give as presents to one of her friends before she left Jerusalem, and which the seller recommended in much the same way as the peasants had done their fruits and rustic produce. His ear-rings he declared to be more rich and rare than any of those which Jacob hid under the oak by Shechem, and free from the idolatrous engravings by which the latter were polluted ; his rings, more costly than that which Pharaoh drew from his own finger and gave to Joseph ; his bracelets, more valuable than those which were taken from the Midianites and offered to the Lord ; his chains, more curiously wrought than any which Gideon took

from the necks of Zebah's and Zalmunna's camels; and his anklets, or golden circles for the legs, more sparkling and delicate than those worn by the Queen of Sheba, when she came to the court of Solomon.

Having purchased such trifles as she required, Zillah offered her arm to her father, who began to find some pain in walking; and they proceeded homewards. On reaching the high road, which crossed the Valley from the principal eastern gate to the bridge over the Cedron, they found it thronged with parties making their way back to the country with their various purchases; while their progress was still farther impeded by numbers of cripples, superannuated people, and other beggars, who had stationed themselves in this great thoroughfare to implore charity from the passengers. The Sagan made a liberal distribution of alms among them; and then, leaning upon his daughter, proceeded with as much

speed as he could exert, saying, as he pressed forward, “ Let us get quickly out of the sound of their voices—I like not the Chaldaic phrases, and the Babylonian terms which still linger among these poor people, and more especially with their elders, for they remind me of the Captivity, and of the misfortunes of Israel. Alas ! we have not yet purified our ancient and noble language from this abomination; and it is already a second time corrupted by our affected Hellenists, and the foppish imitators of the Romans, who, not contented with our national humiliation in being subject to these heathens, would even put their chains around our tongues. I have taught you, my child, the languages of such idolaters, for the sake of the lore that they contained ; but let us never abuse our knowledge to the corruption of that diviner tongue which distinguishes the people of God, and has been hallowed by the mouth of the Deity himself, when he condescended to

make a revelation of His will to Moses, the holy founder of our law."

Upon arriving at home, Zillah retired to her own room, where she found Dinah, her old nurse, waiting for her. "A happy festival to you, my child!" she exclaimed, "and may you live to see many of them! You desired me to call again ere the Pentecost was over; and, well-a-day! I have neither been able to sleep at nights, nor to hold up my head in the day-time, for thinking that we are so soon to lose you—that you are going among the savages who worship a nasty unclean eagle, and who talk an outlandish language, that no true Israelite—nay, I have been positively told, that their first kings were suckled by a wolf, which is much worse than eating grass like Nebuchadnezzar. Well, for my part, I wonder that the good Sagan (blessings on him! I hope he is well) should ever think of teaching you Greek, of all things in the world; for he must

have heard that when the Holy City was besieged, not many years ago, they let down in a basket, every day, over the walls, so much money as would buy lambs for the daily sacrifices, which lambs they drew up again in the same basket. But an Israelite, who spoke Greek, having acquainted the besiegers that so long as the sacrifices were offered, the city could not be taken, the profane villains popped a hog in the basket instead of the usual victim, and from that time we have been accustomed to curse every one that could speak Greek."

"But you will except my father and myself, I should hope, from this sweeping malediction," said Zillah, with a smile.

"Eli! my child! should I speak ill of the good Abba, the pious Sagan who pays me my pension in shekels of the Sanctuary, and, I doubt not, will himself speak to the Steward to continue it during his absence? or of you, whom I shall ever love as my own daughter?"

May you both wash your feet in oil and butter !
May you be as rich as Solomon, who heaped up silver as the dust, and fine gold as the mire of the street ! Alas ! I have done nothing but sigh and weep on account of your departure ; and if I had not been so lucky as to let my lodgings, I verily believe I should have been half tempted to walk down to the great turpentine-tree in the Valley of Hinnom, and imitate the example of Ahitophel.”

“ I am glad to hear that you succeeded with your lodgings, good Dinah ; for I know it was an object that lay near to your heart ; and I trust the same good fortune will attend you during our absence.”

“ Well-a-day ! I fear me not ; for I saw a stork this morning fly over the city, which is ever a bad omen ; and, besides, it is a sure token that the next winter will be a long and hard one ; so that, if by any mischance you

should forget the kind promise you made me, touching the wood——”

“ Make yourself easy,” interrupted Zillah—
“ I have this morning seen Elkanah, the wood-merchant, who dwells in the street Maktesh, and have ordered him to fill your cellar. Nor has my father forgotten to give directions to the Steward for the regular payment of your pension.” Dinah’s apprehensions upon this subject being thus removed, so that her affections could have fair play, unchecked by the selfishness which sometimes contended with, or even predominated over them in her mind, she seemed to be really touched by the mingled feelings of gratitude towards her benefactress, and regret at the thought of so soon losing her. The tears rolled down her cheeks: she sobbed so vehemently that she could not articulate the blessings she wished to pronounce; and, embracing Zillah with all the familiarity of an

equal and the fondness of a mother, she appeared unwilling to release her from her arms, until the voice of Salome, whom she at once disliked and feared, induced her to release her young mistress, to bid her a hurried farewell, and to take a hasty departure from the chamber. Scarcely, however, had she left it, when she ran back in a prodigious flurry, declaring that she had quite forgotten to leave a little bladder of oil of cummin of her own making, and another of anise-water, likewise distilled by herself, which she implored Zillah to take with her by all means ; assuring her that the former was a sovereign remedy for the rheumatism ; and the latter, a cordial of special virtue in almost every ailment. She cautioned her to tie up the neck of the bladders carefully, so as to prevent leakage and waste ; observing that their contents were much too precious to be thrown away, especially since the last rise in

the price of cummin, which she supposed would be soon as dear as coriander seed ; and having again embraced her, and bidden her a fresh farewell, she wiped her eyes, and bustled out of the house.

CHAPTER VIII.

“ THE Festival of the Pentecost is now happily completed, my Zillah,” said the Sagan to his daughter, “ and the King presses for our speedy departure. Now that I am about to quit my sacred duties for a time, they seem to become the more endeared to me, and I view my going away from the Holy City with an ever increasing regret : but these are unavailing, and perhaps unmanly reflections, since I may perhaps benefit her more by the embassy which I have accepted, than by remaining within her walls. Such at least was my motive for consenting to it, and the God of Israel grant that

I may prove a profitable servant in what I have undertaken ! At day-break to-morrow it is my purpose to depart ; be ready therefore, my child, for our going must not longer be delayed." Zillah declared that she had made such preparations as were necessary, and that she should not fail to be ready at the appointed time ; adding that she herself was deeply and sorrowfully affected at leaving the place of her birth, the dwelling of God's chosen people, to go forth into a strange world, among the heathens and the Gentiles ; but that since she was to be accompanied by her father, and was acting in obedience to his wishes, she doubted not that the sense of protection and of duty would quickly reconcile her to the journey. He embraced and blessed her, and then went to join a consistory of the priests, which had been summoned to elect one of the Katholikin as his representative during his absence.

Shortly after his departure, Zillah was

about to quit the room, when she drew back on observing a strange figure stealing covertly out of Salome's chamber, the door of which was nearly opposite to her own. His back was towards her ; he was enveloped in a cloak of black sackcloth, and wore a slouching Greek hat ; but as he cast a cautious glimpse around him, to ascertain, apparently, that he was unobserved, she instantly recognised the strongly-marked features of Esau. As he had expressed so much anxiety to know where she lived, she concluded that he had discovered her abode, had visited the house in search of her, though for what purpose she could not possibly conjecture,—and had entered Salome's apartment, mistaking it for hers. This apprehension, however, was only of momentary continuance ; for Salome herself, opening the door of her chamber, put forth her head, and, with a look of fondness that seldom sate upon her imperious features, continued kissing her hand to him, as he retreated

upon tiptoe, until he disappeared at the farther extremity of the passage, when she again closed the door.

Zillah did the same, bewildered with fresh amazement at what she had seen. Salome's age and character, and the unsuspecting innocence of her own heart, forbade her to put any dishonouring construction upon the interview; and yet there was a manifest indecorum in thus receiving a disguised visitant into her chamber; while the dismissing him with a timid and furtive secrecy so utterly inconsistent with her character, seemed to imply a consciousness of deep and dangerous impropriety in the proceeding. What could have made the haughty Salome stoop to a clandestine interview with a man thus meanly disguised? What could have induced Esau to seek it when both parties obviously dreaded its discovery? Little time was accorded her to indulge in these enquiries, equally vain and perplexing; for Salome shortly

afterwards entered the apartment to enquire whether Zillah had given orders for packing up every thing that might be requisite,—instructing her what articles she would more particularly need, recommending her to discard all that might be deemed superfluous, since only one sumpter mule would be allowed for the baggage of the whole party, in order that they might not attract observation by too numerous a retinue, and even informing her what description of bonnet would afford the best protection from the sun. Some taunting observations escaped her, as to the absurdity of her being included at all in the expedition,—a measure of which she had expressed her decided disapprobation ; and she vented several sneers at the Sagan's unaccountable obstinacy upon this point ; but towards Zillah herself her demeanour was marked with much more than her usual kindness. She appeared to contemplate her with a degree of affection to which she had

hitherto been a stranger ; and after giving her such advice for the regulation of her conduct upon the journey, as none but a shrewd and intelligent woman of the world could have offered, she drew from her bosom a gold chain, to which was appended a large golden star covered with mystical engravings, and put it around her daughter's neck. From this she charged her most strictly never to part, but to wear it constantly where she had placed it, as it was an amulet made by an Egyptian astrologer, and would be found an infallible preservative against witchcraft and other dangers.

Zillah thanked her for her kindness, which she felt the more sensibly from its being so uncustomary ; but she was not a little amazed at the mode chosen for evincing it. She knew Salome to be a free and daring thinker,—one who, like many of her Asmonæan ancestors, disdaining what they termed the thralldom of superstition, leaned towards the

opinions of the Sadducees, a sect which, rejecting all the traditionary doctrines of the Scribes, denied the resurrection of the dead, the existence of angels and spirits, or the souls of departed men, and held other opinions equally repugnant to the Mosaic law. Though she had never heard Salome avow her full participation in these sceptical notions, she had too often listened to her contemptuous sarcasms upon credulity and fanaticism not to be astonished that she, who piqued herself upon her superiority to such superstitions, should pin her faith upon an Egyptian talisman. She had even some doubts about the lawfulness of wearing any such baubles, denounced as they had been by the prophets, and contrary as they were to her own convictions ; but as she attached no credit whatever to the pretended supernatural properties of the amulet, although she could not help valuing it as an unexpected mark of her mother's affection, she thought

that there could be no criminality in conforming to her wishes, and accordingly suffered it to remain where she had placed it. It is merely a harmless trinket of gold in itself, thought Zillah, and can be no abomination in the sight of the Lord, where the wearer merely carries it round her neck as a simple pledge of a mother's love. It is scarcely necessary to add that, in her conversation with Salome, not the smallest allusion was made on either side to the recent mysterious occurrence with Esau. Zillah had seen enough to convince her that their interview had been stolen and secret, and, whatever curiosity she might feel upon the subject, she considered it her duty to be silent.

When Antigonus had resolved to send an embassy for the purpose of bribing Mark Antony, he was somewhat embarrassed as to the species of temptation that he should offer him. In dealing with the Parthians for the crown, he had

bound himself to give them a large sum in silver, and five hundred Jewish women,—a species of remuneration of which the latter portion would perhaps possess little attraction for the Roman, who had the most celebrated beauties of the world at his command ; while the money, even if it were in the less bulky form of gold, would be not only difficult to convey, but fearfully liable to seizure in the then disturbed state of the world. It was known, however, that Antony was a passionate admirer of rare and costly jewels ; his lavish presents of this nature to Cleopatra, with whom he had passed the previous winter at Alexandria, had been widely noised abroad ; and Antigonus conjectured that he could not offer him a more acceptable bribe than a collection of the most precious gems and jewels, which would possess the great advantage of being easily portable, with the still stronger recommendation that they were capable of being

safely secreted in the event of danger. Jerusalem presented considerable facilities for making the collection, since the Hebrews had always been extensive dealers in precious stones, many of which they imported from Arabia and the borders of the Red Sea, and had attained a great proficiency in the art of cutting and engraving upon them. The Maccabees, who had been the first to assume the royal diadem, possessed family jewels of great value, some of which Antigonus resolved to appropriate to his present object, and even extracted several of the largest from the crown,—wisely arguing, that he should probably not want them if he failed in his negotiation ; and that if he succeeded, they might be easily replaced. It only remained to find some one competent to make the necessary additions to the stock by selecting the rarest and most precious stones that were to be found in the city ; for which commission the Sagan recommended a dependent

kinsman of his own, named Gabriel of Michmash, which was the town in which he originally resided.

This man had formerly been a jeweller of some eminence, and of unquestionable skill in his business; but having been suddenly reduced to poverty by the failure of a merchant at Alexandria, and various concurring losses, he had been obliged to accept the means of immediate support from his kinsman the Sagan. Fortune, as if determined to crush him by calamities of every sort, had deprived him of a beloved wife and daughter, within three months of his being thus ruined in his circumstances,—a combination of afflictions which had produced a remarkable effect upon his disposition. By nature he was of a cheerful temperament; and though he had in the first instance been stunned and overwhelmed with such a quick succession of misfortunes, his mind at length began to recover its elasticity,

and he sought to throw off the recollection of his sorrows, whenever they assailed him, by a lively bodily effort, such as dancing, leaping, or snapping his fingers, or, in his more quiet moods, by assuming a tone of banter and railery, which was often at variance with his real feelings, as well as with the expression of his countenance. As the Sagan knew him to be a kindly, cordial, and upright man, he was glad to have an opportunity of serving him, and willingly accepted him as his coadjutor.

Gabriel, who was an enthusiast in his business, soon executed his commission to the entire satisfaction of Antigonus; and as he had picked up a competent share of Latin in his dealings with the Roman merchants of Alexandria and other places, it was finally arranged that he should take charge of the jewels, since he had been accustomed to the best modes of concealing them, and accompany the Sagan, in quality of his amanuensis, as well as for the

purpose of his protection ; for he had evinced his courage and vigour in several skirmishes with the Arabs, when crossing the Desert with his precious merchandize. This plan proved highly satisfactory to all parties. Gabriel concealed his treasures, as well as the Sagan's credentials, in such a way as he thought might bid a safe defiance to detection ; and every preparation having been completed by his companions, they quitted the city at sunrise on the following morning, the whole party being mounted upon stout mules. It has already been mentioned that Simon, one of the Temple porters, and who had been occasionally employed in little confidential services by the Sagan, was to accompany them. Though of a grave, solemn aspect, he was a man of approved, almost of rash courage. He was well armed ; so was Gabriel ; and although the Sagan held it to be inconsistent with his sacred profession to carry offensive weapons, he always walked with

a stout staff; and his kinsman, without mentioning the fact until after their departure, furnished him with one for the present expedition, which had a concealed tuck, or dagger, at its extremity, so contrived as only to start out when a spring was touched. Each of the men had a small leathern case behind him, supplied with such requisites as might be more immediately wanted, and the sumpter mule, led by Simon, carried all the rest of the baggage, among which Zillah, on her father's account rather than her own, had not forgotten to include Dinah's oil of cummin and the bladder of dill-water.

To avoid observation, they passed through the northern quarter of the town, where they were less liable to be recognized, and going out by the Fish-gate, at the north-east angle of the city, they turned to the left, and bent their course westward. Having discarded his priestly robes, the Sagan had arrayed himself in the ordinary dress of his nation, which con-

sisted of a long tunic, with sleeves to the wrist, and fringes at the bottom, over which was a large loose cloak, fringed with blue at the four corners, and bordered with galloon. The ends of this, and sometimes the extremities of the long tunic, were turned up and tucked into the girdle in riding and walking, or whenever the employment of the wearer rendered succinct garments more convenient : whence the phrase of girding up the loins became synonymous with preparing for a journey, or an enterprise of any sort. In this girdle he carried his purse, and a sheathed knife,—an essential appendage to travellers at that era ; and in his hand was the long, smooth staff of black acacia, whose extremity was armed in the manner we have mentioned. On account of his prejudice against the hat, as a Greek innovation, he wore the low cap of a common priest,—an injudicious selection for one who wished to avoid singularity, and more particularly for a traveller about to

visit Italy, where such a covering for the head was mostly restricted to females. Amongst his own countrymen, who might almost be called a nation of priests, it excited little or no attention ; and indeed there were so many parties of all sorts returning homewards from the festival, that they were taken for one of the number, and proceeded with no other notice than the common Hebrew salutation of “ The Lord be with ye ! ” from such wayfarers as they encountered.

On ascending a height, after crossing the valley, or ravine, which still wound under the city walls in this direction, the Sagan checked his mule, and turned towards Mount Olivet, over which the sun had now arisen in full splendour, flashing upon the waters of Bethany, and sending down between the palm-trees and buildings that crowned its summit, broken streams of the most brilliant light, which burnished the tops of the noble grove of olives

that grew upon the sides and base of the Mount, towards the Valley of Jchoshaphat. Under two large cedars at Bethany, some of the country people, to avoid paying rent for sittings in the Temple, had established a little mart for the sale of doves, pigeons, and other articles for the offerings, the waters being much used as a place of purification ; but as the festival was now concluded, they were seen packing up the contents of their shops, preparatory to their return home. Upon Galilee, the highest of the three summits of the Mount, a fire-beacon was stationed, consisting of long staves of inflammable wood and flax, which the sentinels lighted, and shook them about, in case of alarm, till they were answered from other signals,—a precaution suggested by the King's constant apprehensions of treachery and revolt. The olive-gardens of Gethsemane, and the village of Bethphage, embosomed in fig-trees, both partially emblazed by the eager rays of a

Syrian sun, which rushed down upon them like a torrent of intense light, through every aperture upon the hill-top, contrasted strikingly with the dark sterile masses of the rocks in the Valley of Jehoshaphat, and the still blacker mouths of the caverns and grottoes that formed the tombs of the prophets; while, far away to the south-east, the view was bounded by the frowning crags and mountains of Arabia Petræa, beneath which lay outstretched, as in a rocky sepulchre, the paralysed waters of the Dead Sea, glazed over with a wan and ghastly light.

“ It is a goodly and a grateful sight,” said the Sagan, withdrawing his eyes from the latter part of the prospect, on which he had been thoughtfully gazing for some time, “ after we have been looking towards the spot where the Salt Lake enshrouds the buried palaces and temples of the doomed cities, to behold before us the stately Salem, the lovely one of Israel, with

her marble palaces, her lofty towers, her high and massy walls, and, above all, her glorious and magnificent Temple, that ‘beauty of God’s ornament set in majesty,’ surrounded as they are by palm-crowned eminences, and waving groves, and valleys of delightful gardens, which the streamlets gladden with their refreshing music.” After gazing upon the prospect for a considerable time, he slowly turned his mule’s head to the westward, and proceeded in a grave silence, which was not interrupted by any of his companions; for all had rejoiced in the splendour of the view, and all were equally oppressed by the thought of quitting the Holy City.

Leaving the magnificent grotto of Jeremiah to the right, they now turned northward in the direction of Sichem and Bethoron, over the only plain which is to be found in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem. Fields of cummin, forming a continuous nosegay, into which im-

mense flocks of pigeons and doves were perpetually descending ; or of anise, over whose rose-shaped flowers the bees swarmed in such numbers as to fill the air with their humming ; or of saffron, mint, and garlick, for which latter the Jews had never lost their Egyptian taste, surrounded our travellers, until their view was intercepted by the contraction of the road into a narrow lane, enclosed on either side by a hedge of nopals, wild tamarinds, and other trees, the gratefulness of whose shade induced our travellers to halt awhile.

On emerging from this lane, and before they descended into the valley, the Sagan once more turned round to take a farewell view of Jerusalem,—availing himself of the shelter of some ancient cedars, which, at this part of their route, formed a solemn and majestic avenue, throwing their shade far down into the vale beyond. According to tradition, they had been planted by King Solomon,—a circumstance not unlikely,

since it is recorded that he rendered cedars as common in the land of Israel as sycamores ; and they are known to attain an extraordinary age. The grandeur of these venerable trees, some of the trunks of which were forty feet in circumference, while their history threw the mind back, nearly a thousand years, into the times of Jerusalem's greatest glory, made this a fitting and impressive spot for taking a farewell view of the city, which was now dwindled into an indistinct mass of white buildings standing on a hill, and surrounded by a green belt of higher eminences ; though the towers of the walls, the Temple itself, and even the faintly seen line of smoke from the altar, could still be recognised.—“ There is no place like the Holy City ! ” exclaimed the Sagan, after having contemplated it for some time in silence. “ Jerusalem was older than Rome now is, ere Romulus had collected his horde of robbers, or built up a single stone upon the banks of the Tiber.

But it is not from its unrivalled antiquity that our capital derives its claim to the superior reverence of mankind. The history of other cities has been handed down by mere fallible men, whose passions and prejudices were perpetually falsifying what they wrote ; that of Jerusalem is recorded by inspired prophets, kings, and judges, whose writings have been authenticated by the signet of the Deity. Other cities connect themselves in our minds with the earth only from which they sprang ; ours is one continued and sublime association with Heaven. Other cities are the abiding-places of idols, ignorance, and abomination ; ours is the Sanctuary of the true God, and of the religion that He hath revealed to His chosen people : ours contains the sole Palace of the Lord, wherein He hath himself descended to dwell visibly between the Cherubim, and hath made His awful voice heard from amid the cloud, and hath sent forth angels to hallow our precincts with their footsteps, while

every rock that surrounds it is sanctified by the bones of buried prophets; and inspired writers, who have held direct communion with Jehovah : Jerusalem is no terrestrial city ; it lifts itself up into the skies ; or rather, it is as a portion of Heaven that has descended upon the earth."

Such was the enthusiasm of the Sagan, kindled at the thought that he was bidding adieu for an indefinite period to the prospect before him, that he lingered some time longer upon the spot, and then repeatedly kissing his hand towards the city, as an act of departing homage, he at length slowly turned his mule, and began to descend into the valley. Zillah had not given utterance to her feelings, but she had been still more deeply and solemnly affected than her father ; for, although her devotion was not of a nature to depend altogether upon localities, it was so much vivified and exalted by every external object and historical association in the

Holy City, that to lose sight of it, under the uncertainty when she should revisit it, seemed to be almost tearing from her heart a sensible portion of its religion. At every opportunity she had looked back, in order to obtain another glimpse of its white towers and its lofty temple. The steep descent of the road she was now travelling, assured her that they would meet her eyes no more ; a conviction, of which the regret became aggravated into a secret dismay, when she reflected, that she was going forth among foreign and idolatrous nations ; and more particularly when she recalled the predictions of the mysterious Nabal, as to the unrevealed troubles and dangers with which she was to be assailed. Depressed in spirits at thus leaving the dearly-loved place of her birth, she became disposed to place the more implicit confidence in his prophecies, and at the same time less able to combat with the dark and melancholy forebod-

ings that they suggested ; so that she proceeded for some time in silence, taking no notice of her companions, and utterly absorbed in her own disconsolate reveries.

CHAPTER IX.

GABRIEL was the only one not affected with melancholy at thus bidding adieu to Jerusalem : indeed, he was rather gratified than otherwise, at turning his back upon a city in which he had latterly experienced nothing but sorrow and misfortune ; and as his mercantile habits, by rendering him a considerable traveller, had much modified that hatred and horror which the Hebrews in general entertained towards the Gentiles, he contemplated their proposed journey without any of the repugnance that lurked in the bosoms of his companions. With the usual delusion of those who hope that, by flying from the scene,

they can escape the sensation of sorrow, he trusted that the novelties of Italy, and more especially the magnificence of Rome, would dispel those painful recollections which ill assorted with his naturally cheerful temperament. The travellers were now going down by a by-road to Bethoron, through a deep, wild, and precipitous ravine, so narrow that not more than two horsemen could travel abreast. The high rocks on either side were of a dusky red colour, enamelled here and there with lichens of a bright apple-green, with wild flowers, and patches of moss and vegetation, in search of which the long-eared goats were seen leaping from crag to crag, or standing upon some projecting ledge, rearing upon their hind legs, and butting their armed heads towards the party below, as if to frighten them from thus invading their wild territory. Agile as they were in bounding down, the ibex, disdaining so gradual a descent, threw itself boldly from the topmost

heights, and turning in the air, fell uninjured upon its back, the blow being broken by its large horns, which bent backwards from its head, and reached to its haunches. Nimble recovering its legs after this perilous descent, the animal joined the wild goats, and by its angry looks seemed to share the indignation of its companions at the intrusion upon their haunts. The Sagan reminded his daughter, that when the Amorites, after their defeat by Joshua, were crowded together in this narrow gullet, the Lord had cast down great stones from heaven upon them, so that more perished by this terrible visitation, than by the sword of the Israelites. "What a howl of horror must have gone up from among their discomfited host," he exclaimed, "jammed together in this rocky trap, when their pursuers rained darts and arrows upon them from every height, and the skies poured down a crushing destruction, until they were overwhelmed with anger, shame,

confusion, stones, pointed iron, agony, and death ! And how calm is the scene now, when no foot stirs around us, but that of the wild goat, and the cloudless heavens look down upon us in smiling peace, and no sound is heard but the murmur of the south-wind, the cooing of doves, and the peaceful hum of bees !”

“ While you are recalling the past, you are forgetting the present,” said Gabriel :—“ our mules begin to faint with the heat ; I myself stand singularly well-affected towards the refreshments that we brought with us ; and if we speed not into Bethoron, we may find every room pre-occupied by more active travellers, and be disappointed of our resting-place.”—This apprehension proved to be well-founded. On their arrival in the town, its solitary caravansera was found to be too much crowded with wayfarers to afford them the smallest chance of accommodation, and as they had supplied themselves with such provisions as might

be required on their short journey, (for Joppa, the sea-port to which they were bound, was scarcely forty miles from Jerusalem,) they passed through the town in search of some convenient shade in the fields, where they might take their repast, and rest their cattle. Gabriel, accustomed to such expedients, rode forward to discover some fitting retreat; nor was he long in finding a spot admirably adapted to their purpose. It was at the foot of a little rock, from the fissures of which the water, trickling forth, fell into a natural basin, which it overflowed, and formed a little runnel along the surface of the soil, the course of which was only discoverable by the brighter tints of the herbage that fringed it. Over the top of the rock a fig-tree threw its branches, so as to afford an ample shade; while the bees, attracted by the flowery patches that surrounded the rock, had accumulated such an undiscovered store in the clefts of the crag, that the honey oozed out, and ran

down its sides. Dismounting in the welcome shade, they gave their cattle water, and then tying them together with a long string, suffered them to browse upon the herbage, while Gabriel and Simon busily employed themselves in unpacking and preparing the few viands and fruits they had brought with them. The Sagan in the mean while, seated beside his daughter upon the ground, gazed complacently at the landscape that lay outstretched before them, in the direction of Sichem, and which, from the variety of its rich colours, assumed the aspect of a confused and far-extended flower-garden. As a gentle breeze passed over the olive-plantations, turning up the foliage, which is of a shining white underneath, its progress became visible in the form of an evanescent silvery cloud gliding over the landscape. In some parts, the peasants were already ploughing up the soil, using buffaloes for that purpose,—an animal naturally intractable, but which they

had rendered perfectly docile by passing an iron ring through its nose ; the vine-dressers were busy upon the hills and sloping grounds ; others were employed amid the olives, which were now covered with white flowers ; or making incisions in the bark of the sycamore fig-tree, and scraping it with an iron comb, to increase its productiveness ; while in the threshing-floors the unmuzzled oxen were dragging round and round a species of low cart, with broad wheels, which answered the purpose of a flail.

Gabriel and Simon employed themselves in displaying to the most becoming advantage the little store of viands, fruits, and cakes, which had been provided for the refection of the party ; while the animals were supplied with a mixture of oats, peas, and beans, that they might not be less pleasantly occupied than their masters.

After their repast, the whole party remounted their mules, and pursued their journey for some time through an uncultivated country, where

the wild fig-trees waved their broad leaves in the wind, while the prickly pear shot up into fantastic shapes, confusedly piling its bristling tufts over one another. As this little wilderness bordered upon a fertile district, it was the resort of numerous foxes, and other four-footed depredators, many of which were seen prowling about amid the underwood, or darting across the openings in the tangled brakes; their rapid motions, combined with the chattering of the numerous jays and other birds flying overhead, imparting, even to this lonely covert, an animation that seemed to be scarcely in character with the external features of the scene. Emerging from it, they passed shortly afterwards through a rugged ravine, round a detached and barren hill, and began to ascend the mountains, which in this part presented a labyrinth of successive conical eminences, connected with each other at their base. Some were quite bare, with the exception of clumps of dwarf oak, box, and rose-

laurel, fringing their hollows and fissures, or springing from the ravines at their foot ; while the sides of others were clothed with continued woods of olive-trees. On reaching the summit, they saw at a distance, outstretching before them to the north-west, the fertile plain of Sharon, with the city of Joppa situated on a hill at its extremity, flanked by the dark blue horizon of the sea. On one of the eminences to their left stood a lofty castle, frowning above the whole chain of mountains, and looking down upon them as if they were its vassals : and in front, upon another height crowned with palm-trees, was the town of Ramah, where it was the intention of our travellers to pass the night.

A steep and rugged descent now brought them into a narrow cultivated valley, through which a brook pursued its winding way, its banks decorated with white and yellow lilies, which the moisture of the soil had enabled still to defy the withering influence of the summer

sun. The Sagan approached the streamlet, and allowing his mule to drink of the clear water, said to Zillah, "Here let us pause awhile, my child, under the friendly shade of this noble sycamore. This is the Valley of Elah, and beneath our feet is running the brook whence David, the shepherd-boy, the youth of a fair and ruddy countenance, drew the five smooth stones, with one of which he slew Goliath, the giant of the Philistines. Even upon this very spot, perhaps, he stood, and saw himself reflected in the waters, with his staff in one hand, his sling in the other, and his shepherd's scrip by his side. Men, generations, kingdoms, pass away, but how little does Nature change! Here are the bright waters of the brook still flowing as they did in the days of David; and behold! its bed is even now paved with smooth stones, such as those which David put into his bag."

"And it was from the hill we have just descended," said Zillah, "that the shout of Israel

and of Judah arose, when the smitten monster fell forward upon his face with a loud clank, and David, leaping upon his prostrate body, cut off his head with his own sword: and we have been treading in their footsteps, when the Hebrews rushed down upon their discomfited enemies, and pursued them to the gates of Ekron. But sweeter and more peaceful sounds have been heard in this valley. It was upon this victory that David composed, and, perhaps, upon this spot that he sang, the hundred and forty-fourth Psalm."

"Simon! give me my Sepher Tehillim," said the Sagan: "you will find it on the top of the case upon the sumpter-mule."

The Levite took out the psalter, which contained the music and words of the Psalms, in five divisions, and gave it to the Sagan, who turned to the one he had mentioned, and, putting the book into his daughter's hand, said: "We have no psaltery, no instrument of ten

strings with us; but sing to us, nevertheless, the song of the shepherd-boy, the sweet psalmist of Israel: for the echoes of these hills, where he performed the exploit for which he thus gives thanks to God, shall be a nobler accompaniment to your voice, than all the harps and trumpets that were ever formed by hands."

As Zillah, in compliance with his request, took the psalter, and having glanced at the psalm, fixed her beaming eyes upon the deep-blue heavens, it was a sweet, a solemn, and a thrilling sound, to hear her mellow voice floating along the silent valley, awakening the mountains and the brook, and recalling to memory the marvellous events of which they had formerly been the scene; while the echoes made audible responses, as if every hill-top joined in her devotions, and joyfully wafted up to heaven the same hymn of thanksgiving and praise which had been chanted to them by the youthful psalmist a thousand years before. With

great fervency of feeling, although in a low whispering tone, the Sagan had followed his daughter, holding out both his arms in a line with his outstretched beard, as he bent his looks upon the sky; and again dropping his hands upon his mule, when she had concluded, he thanked and blessed his child for her ready obedience to his wish; adding, "This is, indeed, my Zillah, to embody and vivify our historical and religious recollections, the figures of which having previously existed in our minds only as a dim picture, become instinct with life, and move athwart the living landscape, when we stand thus upon the very spot where our country and our faith have achieved their most glorious triumphs!"

No true Hebrew was ever insensible to the united effects of religion, patriotism, and music; and never were their influences more eloquently, though silently expressed, than at the present moment. Zillah's fine features, animated with

a holy rapture, remained still directed towards the skies ; and a lively complacency lighted up Simon's usually stern countenance, as with fixed eyes and open mouth he remained gazing upon the songstress, in the apparent hope that she would continue her melodious warbling. Although the heart of Gabriel was by no means insensible to the ennobling associations that appealed to him, there was less room in it for their developement, since the grief of a bereaved parent came to claim a large share in his feelings. Zillah's voice had recalled to him that of his lost daughter, who had also been an accomplished songstress ; and as he sank into a melancholy reverie, his eyes, which had been unconsciously bent upon the brook, became gradually dim, until the fast falling tears trickled down his beard, and dropped upon the shoulder of his mule. A silence of some minutes ensued, which Gabriel was the first to break. Starting from his abstraction, he hastily gather-

ed up the reins, which had fallen from his hand, and then leaping from his animal, partly to conceal, and partly to dissipate the emotions by which he had been affected, he tightened the girths, arranged the saddle, and exclaimed, as he again vaulted into it, “Hey, Rab Malachi! why is your Saganship so taciturn? Surely there is nothing in this spirit-stirring scene, or in the joyful song of the victorious David, that should fill us with any other thoughts than those of gladsomeness and exultation. Forward, then, most pensive Rab!—forward, my tuneful Miriam!—forward, good Levite of the Temple!—smite thy mule, and let us all speed onward, as if we were pursuing the flying Philistines, and he who first reaches the heights of Ramah shall choose the best bed for his reward.”

Urging his own animal to speed, he dashed through the brook, scudded across the valley, and relaxed not his course till he gained the

foot of the opposite ascent, when he turned round, having by this time partly galloped away from his grief, which, though sharp in its touches, was seldom of very long duration, and, as he wiped the perspiration from his brow, he made signals to the rest of the party to accelerate their pace. As they had not, however, the same motive for heating themselves, and fatiguing their beasts, they pursued their course at the usual rate, which soon enabled them to rejoin the fugitive, when they proceeded together as before. After having mounted the opposite eminence, which proved much longer and more fatiguing than they expected, they again beheld Ramah,* upon another height in front of them ; but they had a second rugged and tedi-

* This word signifies an eminence, in Hebrew ; and, with its various derivatives, was bestowed upon numerous places in Palestine that were situated upon heights. A village on a hill between Joppa and Lydda still bears the name.

ous descent to make before they reached the base of the hill upon which the town was situated. When they at length approached it, the sun was beginning to set, shooting its sloping rays into a clump of fir-trees on their right, of which the tawny, decayed lower branches, as well as the red bark of the trunk and inferior boughs, were burnished with the light till they seemed to be on fire, while the dark mass of the superincumbent foliage remained impervious to the beam. A rock on the summit of the hill threw its broad shade over the houses, but the lofty palms that overtopped them, standing in bright relief against the empurpled sky, still waved their fan-like branches in the sun, as if proud of the daylight which had deserted the buildings beneath them.

Fatigued with their long ride, and oppressed with the heat, the whole party were glad to reach the place where they had determined to pass the night: such, indeed, was the satis-

faction of Gabriel, that he could not refrain from humming a favourite song, composed by his friend Jonathan the Tanner, as they approached the gate of the inn : but the expectations of our travellers were doomed to be frustrated, in the same manner as at Bethoron. Here, too, there was but one inn, of which every nook and corner was pre-occupied by travellers. returning from the festival ; several of whom, unable to procure accommodation within, had pitched little tents outside the wall, in which they meant to pass the night ; while others were seen preparing to convert their carts and vehicles into temporary bed-rooms. As the Sagan was unprovided with any substitute of this sort, and found, upon enquiry, that every apartment in the town, which was, indeed, little better than a village, was engaged, no alternative remained but that they should proceed a few miles farther, to a place called Solomon's Well, where there was an extensive

caravansera, in which, as they were assured, there could be little doubt of their procuring shelter for the night. In this direction, therefore, not less to their own dissatisfaction, than to that of their jaded mules, they slowly proceeded, for the fatigue of all parties prevented any very rapid advance. Nor was their progress cheered by the aspect of the country through which they were now passing: they were still among the mountains, but they began to assume an appearance of greater sterility as well as grandeur. The passengers, whom they had occasionally seen moving about in various directions, gradually disappeared; so that there was no object, not even the dwelling-place of a fellow-creature, to break the loneliness of a scene, over which the evening was now rapidly throwing broad masses of deep purple shadow. Presently, all vegetation ceased; the bare rocks refused sustenance even to the moss; and the last gleams of the sun, more than half of whose broad crimson

disk was now sunk beneath the horizon, shooting among the confused amphitheatre of the mountains, tinged their summits with so red and vivid a glow, that the spectator, contrasting their fiery crests with the black shadows that enveloped every base, might almost have imagined he was gazing upon a succession of volcanoes. One by one these beaming eminences, hanging in the air like cressets of the sky, became extinguished ; the loftiest and the last slowly yielded up the halo that had irradiated its brow ; the sun called in all his lingering rays ; and night reigned undisputed empress of the whole desolated tract.

Unfortunately for our travellers, the road at this moment became so rugged and bad, being bestrewed with large loose stones, that although they were confident they could not be far from the inn described to them, they were obliged to proceed with great caution. They had, in fact, wandered from the high road, before their eyes

had become accustomed to the sudden darkness, into the dry bed of a torrent, which would have ultimately conducted them far from their destined route, had not the moon, shortly afterwards, arisen in serene majesty, and nearly at her full, above the hills in their rear. Discovering their error, by the assistance of her friendly beams, they presently regained their path, and went forward in better spirits. Zillah, anxious as she was to reach their place of rest, requested her father to halt a moment, and turn round, that they might contemplate the altered aspect of the mountains behind them. While they were admiring the prospect, a loud shout, which seemed to startle the whole tranquil scene, reverberated from mountain to mountain, and died sullenly away in the distance. It proceeded from Gabriel, who, having pushed on to an eminence in advance, had gained sight of the desiderated caravansera, and had lustily lifted up his voice to proclaim his discovery, and

summon his companions forward. On reaching this spot, they saw the low building, exactly as it had been described to them, situated in a wide valley overgrown with a wilderness of stunted shrubs and tangled brakes, from which they heard the singularly savage cry of the wild boars, aroused, probably, by Gabriel's shout. "Yonder is, assuredly, the house of which we are in search," said the Sagan ; "for beside it I can discern the stone sides of the well, and the beam that supports the bucket."

Gabriel, whose impatience had urged him forward to make enquiries as to their reception, now came towards them on foot, with the welcome tidings that they could all be accommodated, playfully contending that he was entitled to select the best sleeping-place for himself, since he had been the first to discover and reach the inn, but consenting, with a mock ceremoniousness, to waive his privilege in favour of Zillah. As to their supper, he informed them

that they must depend upon the supplies they had brought with them, all the accommodations of the caravansera being limited to water from the neighbouring well, a sleeping-place, such as it might prove, and protection from any external assailants; which latter object seemed, indeed, to have been the principal object of the architect in erecting his lonesome building. As the inns of those days seldom offered any very abundant supplies, our travellers were not disappointed at this statement, but were right glad to pass through the massy gates of the outer court, which were immediately closed and bolted, when they dismounted. The mules walked of their own accord to the large stone water-trough in the centre of the enclosure; and as the appearance of the new visitants bespoke them to be of good condition, they were conducted to the front hall of the building, to which they ascended by three or four rude steps, formed of unhewn stones, without any cement.

CHAPTER X.

THE inn to which we have now conducted our travellers, was a quadrangular building, without a single exterior window, and only one story high, running round an extensive court-yard, in the centre of which was a large cistern, always filled with water, that the inmates might perform their purifications; while low stone-troughs were placed on three sides of it, for the supply of the cattle. Camels, mules, asses, and one solitary horse, who by his singular beauty seemed to be of Arab breed, and by his housings to belong to a person of quality, were dispersed confusedly about the

yard; some asleep, and others still discussing the provender, which was slung to their heads in bags made of untanned skins. These animals probably belonged to late comers, who had not been able to procure accommodation for their cattle, or had not yet put them up for the night; since a range of stabling ran all round the building, behind the lodgings for the guests, which latter were built in the form of cloisters, on each side of the quadrangle. From these chambers a large niche, with a window, opened into the stable, so as to supply it with light, and enable the traveller, at all times, to see that his horse received proper attention. As the nights were cold, notwithstanding the great heat of the days, many preferred these stables, with clean straw, as a warmer and more sheltered lodging than the exterior chambers, only a few of which were provided with doors towards the court, the rest having no better defence against the weather than a canvass cur-

tain, which was drawn across, and fastened on the inside. In a country without hay, there was, of course, no occasion for racks in these stables, which were furnished instead with a stone, or wooden manger for the provender, placed upon the ground. At the farther end of the court, opposite to the great gate of entrance, was the public hall for the better class of travellers, elevated a step or two higher than the cloisters that flanked it on either side.

When the Sagan and his party entered this chamber, they found it occupied by several guests, who received them with the usual salutation, "The Lord be with you!" to which the new visitants returned the customary reply, "The Lord bless you!" when the conversation, to which their appearance had given a momentary interruption, proceeded without restraint. The strangers were mostly discoursing of the festival, from which the greater part

seemed to be returning, and, from their frequent allusion to the Sagan, it was obvious that his change of dress had effectually concealed him. Fortunately, their observations were in general of a highly favourable nature; and although Gabriel, wishing to banter his companion, urged several objections against his performance of the sacerdotal duty, declaring, that what he was then asserting he would boldly maintain, even before the face of the party implicated, he could not obtain a single convert to his opinion. The Sagan smiled complacently at this defeat of his kinsman's malicious pleasantry, while Zillah playfully recommended to him, in a whisper, not to try any experiment upon his auditors, as to their estimation of himself, since it might lead to a much less satisfactory result. Gabriel fully admitted the prudence of her advice, and the strangers renewing their conversation, talked of the purchases they had respectively made at Jerusalem; the rumoured

depredations committed by a numerous band of robbers in Galilee ; the death of Phazael, Herod's brother, who had beaten out his brains against the walls of his dungeon, when he had been seized and imprisoned by Antigonus ; the projects of Mark Antony ; the probable designs of Herod the Tetrarch, whose escape into Italy now began to be bruited abroad ; and such other subjects as formed the prevailing topics and politics of the day. From these they adverted to one which seemed to have excited the curiosity of the speakers in no small degree, namely, the probable quality and occupation of a stranger, who had remained a short time in the hall, and whose fine figure, splendid half-armour, and singular appearance, not to add the remarkable beauty of his Arabian horse, had riveted their attention in a more especial manner, because he had kept himself aloof, and had never uttered a syllable. " Was it the figure who muffled himself up in his

cloak, and quitted the apartment by the opposite door as we entered it?" enquired Gabriel. "By the Temple!" he continued, on receiving an answer in the affirmative, "I cannot speak to the splendour of his armour, for I saw it not; but by the blazing ruby upon his finger, he ought to be one of the Allophim and Melakim, a king or a prince at least, for a more costly jewel sparkles not in the Ephod of the High Priest himself. Verily, Rab Malachi," he added in a whisper to the Sagan, "it is finer than that of thirty carats which I bought of Benjamin of Gadara for our present enterprise. Where could the lucky rogue have picked up such a gem? Didst ever see such a glorious lamp of solid red light?"

Zillah, to whom the latter interrogatory was addressed, replied, that she had only caught a glimpse of the stranger's back as he quitted the apartment. "Shall I follow him," resumed Gabriel, "and offer to buy his ring, for So-

lomon himself never carried such a one upon his hand? I shall be sure to find him out ;—whithersoever he may have skulked, his fiery finger will betray him, like a glow-worm in a hedge ; and though we have not money enough to purchase such a rarity, we may barter it for some of our yellow topazes of Cush, or some of our star-spotted sapphires, whereof we have more than enough ; and two, moreover, of each that have slight flaws in them. I tell thee, Rab Malachi, that the amorous Antony would willingly give a kingdom to see such a ruby hanging over the brown nose of his Egyptian enchantress.”

“ Were it the ring of power and authority which Pharaoh gave to Joseph,” replied the Sagan, who had listened with some impatience to his eager whispering, “ I would not care or chaffer about it at the present moment. See you not that our Zillah is almost exhausted for want of some refreshment? Seek out Simon,

whom we left with the mules, and let him bring hither such viands as remain, and in the mean time we will perform our ablutions, for I observe that lavers are placed in yonder corner. Prithce look also to our lodgings, or at least to Zillah's, for if we can secure a sheltered sleeping-place for her, I care not for myself."

Gabriel departed the more willingly upon this commission, because he hoped at the same time to gather some tidings of the stranger with the ring; in which expectation, after having despatched the Levite with the remnant of their provisions into the hall, he made enquiries of several persons who were loitering about the yard; none of whom, however, could afford him the smallest satisfaction. It was evident that he had not taken his departure, since his beautiful black Arabian remained where he had first seen him, although it was presumable, as his saddle and bridle had not been removed, that his master did not mean to pass the night

in the inn. This only rendered Gabriel the more anxious to ascertain whether he had any disposition to part with the ring ; at all events, he determined to request a momentary inspection of it, before the opportunity should be lost, for he was not only a connoisseur in jewels professionally, but a most ardent admirer of any that were rare and curious. As if in the expectation that it could give him some intelligence about its rider, he approached the Arabian, which was tied to one of the troughs, but the spirited animal, apparently not relishing the company of any stranger, evinced such hostile intentions, that he was fain to make a precipitate retreat, and betook himself to the supper-party in the hall, utterly disappointed in all his hopes.

Unaccustomed to the exertion of riding, especially during a whole day, Zillah expressed a wish to retire to rest, almost immediately after the conclusion of their meal, and the Sagan ac-

accompanied her, to see that the dormitory which Gabriel had secured for her, was rendered as comfortable as the rude nature of the place would allow. On their passage thither, they were accosted by a wandering Minstrel, who, having found his way into the quadrangle, was preluding on a well-toned sackbut, and offering to sing any song that the company might call for, from the ninety-first Psalm, which he maintained to be the oldest in the world, since it was written by Adam, down to the last new drinking-song which had been composed for the Club of the Sadducees at Jerusalem. A voice from within one of the cloisters called out for the song of the Seven Maccabee Brothers who were tortured by Antiochus,—a portion of the Jewish history which, on account of the heroism evinced by these young martyrs, and the tragical horrors of their death, was always a popular subject. The Minstrel immediately began it, describing their tortures at great

length, and without sparing a tittle of their painful details ; but as these possessed little attraction for the Sagan, and still less for his daughter, they proceeded to examine the sleeping-room. Though it was the best that remained disengaged at the time of their arrival, it offered but sorry accommodations to a young female who had been habituated to the luxuries of the Sagan's house at Jerusalem, and to a boudoir overhanging a garden of roses. In one respect, indeed, it was superior to many of the others in the quadrangle ; it was supplied with a wooden door, but this had been apparently fashioned for some other tenement, for it did not reach the lintel by several inches, and seemed to be on scarcely better terms with the posts on either side. However, it offered a better security than canvass ; and the Sagan, having seen that it would fasten on the inside, and arranged her humble bed-room to the best advantage, affectionately kissed his daughter, and

bade her good night ; cautioning her, before his departure, to avoid exposing herself to the brilliant moonlight that streamed through the aperture over the door, which was apt to produce an injurious and blighting effect upon the eyes, if it fell upon them in all its untempered vividness.

When her father had departed, Zillah fastened the rude door, sate herself down, and as she contemplated her strange-looking and forlorn quarters, of which the lower portion was in deep shade, while the upper part was irradiated by a stream of light, pouring in over the door, she could hardly believe in the reality of the change ; and a sense of loneliness and danger, combined with her bodily fatigue, affected her with a deep depression of spirits. She got up, and looking through the niche into the stable, beheld the way-worn mule she had ridden, already stretched upon the ground in sleep. Rude as it was, her apartment seemed tolerably secure ; she knew

not what peril she should apprehend, and be it of what nature it might, she reflected, that her friends were within call to avert it. But the words of Nabal the Black Shadow recurred to her, in her present situation, with redoubled force. He had predicted that she should be assailed by dangers; she was now in a predicament that exposed her to casualties and misfortunes of all sorts; and the very uncertainty as to their nature, or the quarter whence they were to proceed, imparted a vagueness to her apprehensions, that only rendered them the more distressing. By summoning her energies to her aid, she thought that she could boldly grapple with any tangible or defined antagonist; but to live in constant dread of a calamity ever impending, and yet never seen, was more than her present courage could sustain. It was the first time, too, that she had been separated from home,—always a painful trial for a susceptible mind, and one which became doubly distressing

to Zillah, when she reflected that hers was no ordinary alienation from the place of her birth, but that she was going to cross the great sea, and entrust herself to pagans and barbarians, for such she considered the Romans, who spoke a foreign language, lived in a remote country, and worshipped false gods. The deep despondency generated by such thick-coming fancies, and the uneasiness of her miserable bed, united to deprive her for a considerable time of repose ; but at length the fatigue of the body triumphed over the anxieties of the mind, and she sunk into a profound sleep.

It had lasted several hours, when she was awakened by the music of a sackbut sounding close to her door, and seeming to be struck by a master's hand, although the plaintive notes were purposely kept down to the softest pitch, as if their melody were not meant to be heard by any other than herself. On her first starting up, she was bewildered, and did not immediately recol-

lect where she was ; for the moon having passed behind that side of the quadrangle, the light no longer streamed in over the door ; so that she again closed her eyes upon the darkness, imagining she had been either dreaming of the Temple music, or that the Minstrel, who had accosted them before she retired to rest, was amusing himself with a midnight capriccio. To the latter conclusion she was the more forcibly impelled, because she thought she could distinguish the tone of the identical instrument she had already heard, although it seemed to be touched by a more skilful musician ; but she had scarcely formed this solution of the mystery, when the sounds were repeated : a low and gentle prelude was played, and by the time she was quite awake, and had gradually recovered her recollection, a manly, cultivated voice of surpassing sweetness, sang, or rather whispered, the following stanzas :

“ O Lady ! though far from Jerusalem’s towers,
O’er mountains and valleys, your flight you pursue ;
Though far you may wander from Palestine’s bowers,
Or speed in your bark o’er the billowy blue ;—

My heart will still follow, with steady devotion,
That wandering heaven it ne’er may attain ;
As the cloud’s faithful shadow, o’er earth and o’er
ocean,
Still tracks its celestial mistress, in vain.”

In the surprise of the moment, Zillah’s first impression had been that of terror ; and she hearkened for some seconds in a breathless uncertainty, whether or not she should call out for assistance ; but the bland and tender gentleness of the tones, the tenor of the sentiment, which evidently bore allusion to herself, and above all the voice of the serenader, in which she distinctly recognised that of Esau, whom she had first encountered under the great sycamore-tree at Jerusalem, while it in some degree

gradually dispelled her apprehensions, bewildered her with such an utter amazement, that she sat up listening in motionless silence till the strain was concluded. Shortly after it had ceased, she heard a deep sigh, and then the noise of footsteps moving across the court-yard, when all was again buried in profound silence. She waited for some minutes, eager to catch the smallest sound that might solve the enigma of this mysterious minstrelsy, but as every thing remained hushed in deep stillness, her curiosity impelled her, after some delay, to stand upon the pallet, and steal a glimpse through the aperture over the door ; which she thought she might safely do, as the moon no longer shone upon that side of the quadrangle. With as much caution and as little noise as possible, she accordingly placed herself so as to obtain a complete view of the court-yard, in which, however, nothing was seen to move. About one-third of the enclosure, upon the side on

which she slept, was in shade, of which the extremity was marked by a black line across the court ; while the buildings opposite, glistening with the heavy dew, received the full light of the moon ; except where the deep vaults of the cloisters broke it by arches, or half arches, of a solemn and impervious gloom. In the centre of the enclosure, asses, mules, and camels, were intermingled in sleep ; the latter throwing fantastic shadows around them, as their long necks lay outstretched upon the ground. It looked as if every animal had recently expired where its body was extended, for not a shadow moved ; all was silent and still as death itself, save that the surface of the large cistern, slightly fanned by the night breeze, gleamed and twinkled in the moonbeam ; and that a gentle rippling was heard, though scarcely audible, as the water was wafted against its stone confines.

Embarrassed as she was to account for the strange interruption of her sleep, and the rapid

disappearance of the Minstrel, Zillah, struck by the tranquil picturesqueness of the scene before her, remained gazing upon it ; now filled with a vague curiosity, not unmingled with apprehension, and again inspired with confidence, as she looked upwards to the serene and cloudless heavens, when the sound of horse's feet drew her attention to the opposite corner of the quadrangle. Scarcely had she turned her eyes in this direction, when lo ! from the deep dark cloister behind the gate of entrance, a figure, moving forth like a graceful and noble apparition, presently stood in the full and vivid light. Zillah shrank backwards, thrilled at once with amazement and alarm ; but as she still kept her eyes riveted upon the object, she perceived that it was a warrior in half-armour, leading out the beautiful Arabian horse which she had previously seen in the court-yard. The stranger's face was turned away from her, but by the coruscations that played around his hand,

as he threw the bridle over his horse's neck, she concluded that he wore the marvellous ruby, which had excited so much admiration in Gabriel, and thus became convinced that it was the same individual who had quitted the hall of the inn as they entered it. His back still remaining turned towards her, she bestowed a momentary glance of admiration upon his horse, whose glossy neck and long mane, which he shook into the air with impatience, broke the moonbeam into flashes, only less bright than those which sparkled from his large projecting eyes, as he champed his foam-covered bit, and eagerly pawed up the earth with his fore-foot. This object, however, did not long occupy her attention, for the figure at length turned round, and she immediately recognised the features of Esau, no longer clad in the savage garb appropriate to his assumed character of the wild man of the mountains, but splendidly and elegantly accoutred in the half-armour of a

warrior ! His dark beard hung over his glittering cuirass, like the shadow of a rock over a moon-lighted lake ; the hilt of his sword betrayed itself by its brilliancy amid the foldings of his cloak : his helmet was of brass, surmounted by a short black tuft, but not so closely adjusted to his head as to prevent the escape of the dark hair which curled around his handsome features, and united itself with his beard. As he fixed his eyes with an intent and mournful expression upon the cloister occupied by Zillah, she shrank still farther back, lest she should be discovered, forgetting that she was effectually concealed by the deep shade that shrouded all that portion of the quadrangle. In a moment afterwards, he placed his hand upon the shoulder of his steed, and vaulted into the saddle, when the porter, whom he had previously summoned, opened the gates, and he rode forth. The portals were then again closed and barred, she presently caught

the sharp clatter of his horse's hoofs as he galloped up the hills, steep as they were, and at the same moment heard the howling of a jackal, and the fierce, savage cry of the wild boars, startled from their lairs by such an unusual alarm in the deep dead of night. These sounds gradually died away, the porter had disappeared, silence was again restored, and Zillah remained gazing upon the scene, and upon the animals outstretched in sleep before her ; all once more as hushed and still, as if it were some quadrangle in the Palace of Death, from which the strange warrior had just made his escape, and wherein she herself remained a prisoner.

To avoid the coldness of the air, she at length returned to her bed ; but what she had seen and heard had effectually banished sleep, and the remainder of the night was passed in vain conjectures as to the inexplicable and sudden metamorphosis in the appearance of Esau ; his in-

terview with Salome ; the motives for his former disguise, or present military garb ; and above all, as to the cause of the interest that she appeared to excite in him, whenever he saw her, and the meaning of the stanzas that he had addressed to her. Their encountering at such a place of general rendezvous as an inn might be purely accidental, but the words of his song seemed to infer not only that he would follow her whithersoever she went, and however unsuccessful might be his pursuit, but that he was aware of her purposed voyage across the great sea. It was possible, therefore, that she might again meet him, even in Italy ; and yet that he should thus track her course, without explaining his purpose, seemed hardly within the scope of probability ; especially as his military dress intimated that he belonged to some of the conflicting parties with which the world was then infested, and must, therefore, have more important objects to pursue than to be

running after a stranger whom he had only encountered two or three times.

While she bewildered herself with these vain speculations, the morning began to dawn; and the sun had not yet struggled above the eastern hills, when her father and Gabriel came to summon her to a renewal of their journey, which they wished to accomplish before the meridian heats. She imparted to them the circumstance of the midnight serenade, and her discovery that the stranger who wore the rare ring was the singer; but she did not disclose the tendency of his stanzas, deeming it unnecessary to agitate them with her own indefinite apprehensions, especially as the song in question might be a mere complimentary effusion, void of any specific object or intended application to herself. Her father mused upon the occurrence, but said nothing; and in Gabriel it seemed to excite no other emotion than regret that he had lost the opportunity of in-

specting a jewel which had excited his admiration in no ordinary degree.

By the time they had despatched their frugal breakfast, Simon had saddled their mules, which they remounted, and the party again set forward upon their journey; the Sagan discoursing with his kinsman upon such objects as claimed their attention, though Zillah's thoughts remained too much absorbed in the adventure of the night to allow her to participate very freely in their conversation. Arriving at the extremity of the mountainous region, they now saw outstretched before them, in all the rich and variegated exuberance of its fertility, the celebrated plain of Sharon, covered with flocks and herds, gardens and cultivated fields, whence the morning air wafted towards them an odoriferous and refreshing sweetness. Extending along the coast from Gaza to Mount Carmel, this delightful district was thickly dotted

with villages, betrayed by the clumps of palm and olive-trees in which they were embosomed. In the spring, every open space had been covered with the beautiful roses for which the soil had always been famous, as well as with carnations, tulips, and lilies, whose brilliant colours had converted each field into a parterre; but the heats of summer had now left nothing but their dried and withered stalks, which encumbered the ground in such profusion, that the peasants were gathering them into large heaps, and carrying them off as fuel to heat their ovens.

The approach to Joppa seemed to confirm the celebrity that it had acquired for the superior excellency of its fruits, since the road passed through a continued succession of the most delicious gardens, filling the air with fragrance, and delighting the eye with a paradise of intermingled fig, olive, apple, pear, pomegranate, almond, and

various other productive trees, enlivened with parterres of flowers, and interspersed with ponds and fountains, around whose margins seats were placed beneath the grateful shade of cypresses and palms. Beautiful, however, as it was, it won but little notice from our travellers ; for they had heard that a view of Jerusalem might sometimes be obtained from the lofty heights that overhung the town, and in the expectation of a sight, which to them was more attractive than all the gardens and landscapes of the world, they toiled up the rocky eminence, regardless of the heat, or the steepness of the ascent. On gaining the summit, the atmosphere was not clear enough to afford them the gratification they had anticipated ; so that they were fain to descend with feelings of keen disappointment. Gabriel's chagrin was quickly dissipated by the bustle that surrounded them as they entered the suburbs of the town ; for Joppa was an exceed-

ingly populous place; and Zillah herself, as she gazed upon the foreigners of all nations, attired in various costumes, and flitting about in different directions, soon became interested in the novelty of her situation, and made enquiries of her kinsman, as to the strange passengers and buildings, with the most lively curiosity. Even the carts, laden with merchandise of every description, excited her attention, both from their number, and the unknown jargon of their drivers, most of whom were Gentiles; but that which more particularly struck her, was to behold the huge elephants, an animal she had but rarely seen, employed in dragging immense blocks of stone, destined to form a mole in the harbour. Surrounded with all the tumult of trade, and moving through a population which seemed to be constantly increasing as they advanced, they reached the fortifications, when they passed under a long gateway, flanked at

each extremity with towers, and at length entered the city of Joppa, which claims to itself the distinction of being the identical place whence Noah went into the ark, and in which the second father of mankind finally deposited his bones.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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